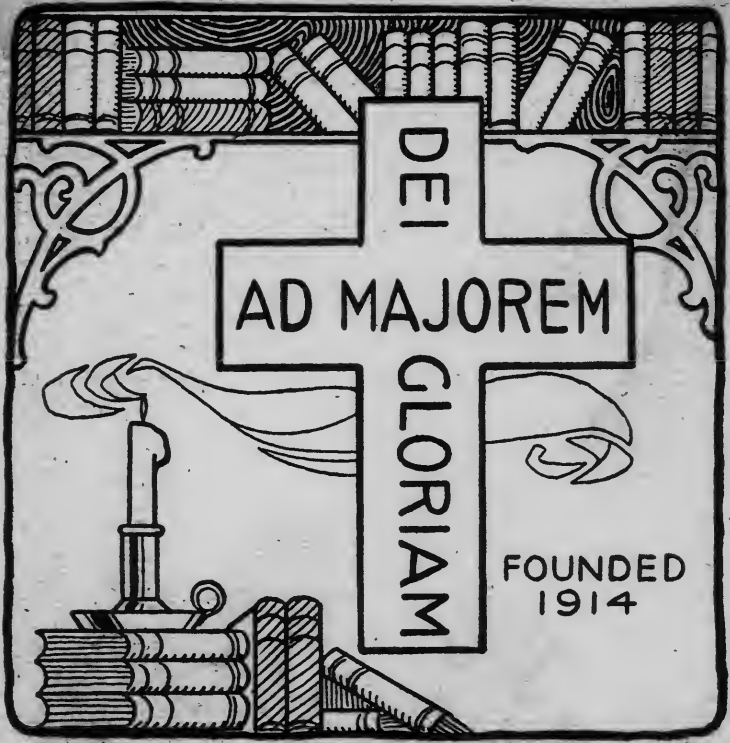
GLIMPSES
OF
EARLY METHODISM
IN
YORK

JOHN LYTH, D.D.

School of Theology



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GLIMPSES

OF

EARLY METHODISM

IN YORK

AND

THE SURROUNDING DISTRICT.

BY

JOHN LYTH, D.D.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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DEDICATED

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST SOCIETIES

IN YORK, WITH THE FERVENT PRAYER THAT GRACE

AND PEACE MAY BE MULTIPLIED UNTO THEM.

Wes. 920

PREFACE.

——:o:——

NEARLY one hundred and fifty years have passed away since Methodism found an entrance into the city of York by the very means which its enemies employed to destroy it. Its early struggles and successes, and those who took part in them, are with a few exceptions forgotten, and some remain only as indistinct echoes of the past. The design of the following pages is to collect such facts as are available in a permanent form, and in carrying out this object the writer has endeavoured to produce a volume which while possessing a special local value may be generally interesting and useful. How far he has succeeded the reader will judge.

Besides the sources of information indicated in the foot-notes, and a valuable collection of documents and correspondence in his own possession, the writer has been favoured with the inspection of other MS. and original letters; for the use of which he has to thank the Rev. Benjamin Hellier, the governor of Headingley College, and also Messrs Luke Thompson, John Francis Taylor, Ald. Agar, and George Stamp, of Grimsby. His thanks are also due to Mr. William Monkhouse, and Mr. William Eskett for the photographs and drawings from which the illustrations of this work have been copied.

JOHN LYTH.

YORK, Feb. 24th, 1885.

N.B.—A few unimportant typographical errors have occurred which the reader will easily correct, but he is especially desired to observe that on page 111, in the last line but two, £20 should read £200.

CHAPTER I.

The Rise of Methodism. 1729—1740.

The rise of Methodism in the early part of the last century forms an epoch in the history of the Christian Church, the full significance of which will be better understood and appreciated as time rolls on. So long as the mists of prejudice and the jealousies excited by party interest prevail, the fairest work of God is distorted by the medium through which it is contemplated; but when these are dissipated by the bright shining of the sun of righteousness—when the glory of our common Lord and the spread of His kingdom become the supreme object of desire and hope, then all will be clear.

Like every other great religious movement, Methodism at the outset met with but scant justice, and violent opposition. Its first advocates, some of whom were men of education and position, although they simply aimed at the revival of true godliness, were everywhere subjected to misrepresentation and bitter persecution. Nor is this at all surprising; their purpose and the means by which they sought to accomplish it placed them in antagonism with the spirit of the times. By their plain and pointed preaching of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, they offended the world, and those whose religious profession was nothing more than empty form; for the offence of the cross has not ceased. By their irrepressible zeal they burst asunder the bands of ecclesiastical authority, and rudely

disturbed the quiet dignity of the Established Church. By their holy enthusiasm, which in some instances overstepped the limits of conventional propriety, they scandalized the refined taste of some truly Christian people who had not yet learned to make due allowance for differences of temperament, circumstances, and condition. And their frequent gatherings in the streets and in private houses, coupled with false rumours respecting their objects, especially at a time of great political excitement, awakened grave suspicions in the minds of magistrates and other friends of social order. Yet supported by divine grace in the face of these difficulties they bravely prosecuted the task they had undertaken, until the voice of slander was silenced, the violence of persecution was quenched, and Methodism became an admitted success.

Southey, who cannot be suspected of partiality, describes the state of religion and education in this country at the beginning of the eighteenth century in the strongest terms. He says "The greater part of the nation were totally uneducated—Christians no farther than the mere ceremony of baptism could make them, being for the most part in a state of heathen, or worse than heathen ignorance."* Elsewhere he declares his conviction, "that there never was less religious feeling, either within the Establishment or without, than at the time of Mr. Wesley's appearance; and that he and Mr. Whitefield were the chosen instruments of Providence for giving a great impulse to religious feeling when it was needed most."†

A writer in the Encyclopædia Britannica observes: "Whatever objection may be brought against the complication of the machinery of Methodism as opposed to the

* Southey's Life of Wesley: new edition, p. 206. † Colloquies.

simplicity of the New Testament, this should not prevent us doing justice to Wesley and his followers, by admitting the importance of the services which they have rendered to the cause of religion, education, and morality, throughout the empire. By no denomination of Christians, perhaps, have greater benefits been conferred, in these respects, on the nation at large than by the Wesleyans. Impelled by an undaunted zeal, they have visited the most abandoned, and instructed the most ignorant of the population. Wherever they have gone they have carried the elements of a renovated state of society with them, in the doctrines they have taught and the duties they have inculcated. In many parts of England where, before they commenced their labours, the truths of Christianity were as little known as they are in heathen countries, they have succeeded in raising large and active communities, amongst which the effects of Christian teaching are apparent in the good conduct, comfortable circumstances, and increasing respectability of those by whom they are composed. Their zeal has also operated beneficially on other denominations, and has called forth energies that, but for the stimulus of their example, might have continued to lie dormant. In short, it must be confessed that England and America owe an immense debt of gratitude to the illustrious founder of this powerful society; and that the loss of Methodism would be a loss to the world."*

When to these independent testimonies we add the notorious fact, that Methodism by means of its missionary agencies has contributed very largely to the spread of evangelical truth in other, especially heathen, lands; and that it now stands embodied before the world in a num-

* Vol. XIV, p. 753, Seventh edition.

ber of vigorous church organizations; which, though for various reasons divided in their operation and in their spheres of labour, are yet one in purpose and aim, as was abundantly demonstrated at the Ecumenical Methodist Conference recently held in London, it is strange that even now, after one hundred and fifty years, it should in some quarters be ignorantly or wilfully misunderstood;—stranger still, that after all the good it has actually accomplished, any, who profess to love the cause of God, should call in question its authority, and even its right to exist; and strangest of all, that any, who believe that Christ is "Head over all things to His church," should imagine that He is bound, in carrying out the accomplishment of His gracious designs, to proceed in accordance with human laws and ecclesiastical prescriptions.

Since the time when the Christian Church began to issue forth from the fogs of superstition and error, with which it had been enveloped by the ascendency of Rome, every step in advance has been distinctly marked by the interposition of a divine hand. First, Wyckcliffe in this country,—"the morning star of the Reformation," whose clear radiance illumined Europe; then, fifty years later, John Huss in Bohemia, at the opposite extremity of Christendom, protested loudly against the scandals not only permitted but practised by the papal hierarchy. Like John the Baptist they cried, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Next, after the lapse of a century, Martin Luther and his coadjutors were raised up to effect a reformation in Christian doctrine, and especially insisted upon the sinner's justification by faith alone without the works of the law. Their cry was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Again a hundred

years later Spener and Francke in Germany, followed in the course of a few years by Wesley and Whitefield in England, laboured successfully to promote a living scriptural Christianity in opposition to a cold and lifeless dogmatism; and the spirit of their testimony, while taking up the protest of their noble predecessors, was: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Thus Pietism in Germany, and Methodism in England, as they rose about the same time, had the same objects in view, and proceeded on the same principles; but they have had a different history. Pietism, if not fostered, was at least tolerated by the national church, and found a shelter within its pale. It needed little organization and that of the simplest kind; hence instead of diffusing itself, it was absorbed and has lost much of its original life and vigour. Methodism on the contrary was hated, misrepresented, persecuted, and ultimately *forced out* of the national Establishment. By an overruling Providence it was placed in such a position, that it must either organize or die;—it must either sacrifice its vitality or grow out of the contracted limits within which ecclesiastical authority sought to confine its growth. The simple truth is Methodism *grew*, and it has grown until it has become an independent church, overleaped the boundaries of nationality and country, and spread itself through the world; realizing the motto of its founder:—"The world is my parish." There was no reason why Methodism, which was defined by Dr. Chalmers as "Christianity in earnest," should not

have developed within the borders of the Anglican Church *except* that the clergy and bishops and the magnates of Oxford would not let it. God overruled the wrath of man, so Methodism grew;—"it was a fruitful bough; even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the *wall*; the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him and hated him; but his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."

It is needless to record here the oft-repeated story of the Oxford Methodists and to trace the history of the name,* at first given in derision, but now become a title of respect and honour. But it is important to observe that the little society formed at Oxford in 1729, of which John Wesley was the acknowledged leader, contained the germ of the Methodist movement, as it not only included the men who became its chief promoters, but also exhibited its true spirit and some of its essential principles. Its members sought to cultivate personal holiness, inward and outward; and for this purpose they carefully studied the Holy Scriptures, and encouraged each other in the practice of piety. In conformity with the apostolic precept they met together "to exhort one another" and "to provoke one another to love and good works." What was this but an incipient class meeting? Certainly the Oxford Methodists had no anticipation of the vast results that followed in the good Providence of God. They devised no plans for future action, they had no new doctrines to propound; they instituted no new forms and practices; least of all had they any idea of schism. Nor were these things imputed to them at the time. The charges preferred by

* See Methodist Magazine, vol. 64, p. 593.

their opponents were widely different, "they were too religious; too rigid in their observance of the rubrics of the church, and the statutes of the university; too zealous in visiting those that were sick, and in prison; and too constant in their attendance upon the weekly communion." What to-day is greatly applauded was then counted an offence.

Nearly ten years elapsed before the influence of Methodism began to be extensively felt. An interval of preparation was necessary for those whom God had chosen as His instruments for awakening a deeper religious feeling throughout the land. Intensely anxious to glorify God, and benefit their fellow men, they preached and laboured where opportunity served. but they needed to learn their own insufficiency; to be stripped of some prejudices acquired by early association; to be taught the way of salvation more perfectly through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and above all to be endued with "power from on high." God's methods of teaching are wonderful as they are wise, and it was perhaps for this reason the four who were destined to become the prominent leaders of the new reformation, viz.: the two Wesleys, Whitefield, and Ingham, were providentially guided to America, where, besides scattering much precious seed in a new soil, they acquired many valuable lessons of practical wisdom. Their intercourse with the Moravian brethren, especially the conversations of the Wesleys with Peter Böhler, and the visit to Hernhuth did much, not only to form the character of the men, but to shape the outer form of Methodism.

At length in 1738 we find them all collected together in London. The place of meeting was a plain but venerable

building in Neville's Court, Fetter Lane; which afterwards became the Moravian Chapel. Here the word was dispensed with "amazing power and success," and those who received it were united together in Christian fellowship. Among the awakened were Lord and Lady Huntingdon, Sir John Phillips, Sir John Thorold, and others. Here, on the first of January 1739, was held the memorable lovefeast, at which were present some sixty of the brethren, including all the Methodist leaders, and a number of the Moravians. "It was a Pentecost indeed," says Whitefield; and Wesley, more explicit, observes—"As we were continuing intent in prayer the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from our awe and amazement at the presence of the Divine Majesty, we broke out with one voice, '*We praise Thee O God! we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.*'"* Can any doubt that this was a baptism for their great work?

At Bristol, Whitefield had already commenced preaching in the open air; and during the course of this year, the Wesleys, prohibited from preaching in the churches, because of their faithful testimony to the truth, and the increasing crowds that flocked to hear them, imitated his example. If this was a violation of ecclesiastical order, it was *forced* upon them by the necessity of the case. The people were perishing for lack of knowledge; and their commission, which no human authority could repeal, was to "preach the gospel to every creature." The extraordinary and uniform success, which attended these unusual efforts, was a higher imprimatur than that of king or prelate, and they might well afford to incur the frowns of men when God

* Wesley's Journal, Vol. I. p. 160.

approved. The erection of suitable preaching-houses soon followed as a matter of convenience and necessity. Thus was Methodism fully initiated, and its rapid diffusion, under God's blessing, must be attributed to its characteristic features, experience and testimony;—the living witness within, and the open acknowledgment of the power of divine grace. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

About the close of the year "grievous errors" sprang up among the Moravians some of whom "asserted in plain terms; 1. That, till they had true faith, they ought to be still; that is to abstain from the means of grace, the Lord's supper in particular. 2. That the ordinances are not means of grace, there being no other means than Christ."* For this reason Wesley and his friends formally separated from them, and the foundation was laid of the "United Societies of the People called Methodists." The Wesleys now extended their labours to Bath, Bristol, Kingswood and Wales; everywhere forming societies of those who "desired to flee from the wrath to come." Whitefield took a wider range, and attracted by his sanctified eloquence overwhelming crowds were bowed under the word as the trees before the wind; whilst Ingham returned to his native Ossett, where he became the pioneer of Methodism in Yorkshire.

It is an interesting fact that Wesley preached in Yorkshire as early as 1733. He was then on a visit to Wentworth House in company with his father, "who was engaged with some literary work, and found it necessary to consult the library of the Marquis of Rockingham. Their stay

* Wesley's Journal, Vol. VI. p. 232.

being prolonged over the Sabbath day, Mr. Wesley occupied the pulpit in Wentworth church, to the no small gratification of the parishioners."* Also in 1734 Mr. Ingham, when at Ossett for his vacation, sought to alleviate the spiritual condition of his neighbours, as appears from the following extract from a letter addressed to Mr. Wesley, which is the more interesting as it shows how the Oxford Methodist spent his time at home. "I rise at five or sooner, I spend till six in devotion,—repeating a hymn and chanting a psalm, then praying and reading the Holy Scriptures. At six, Christian treatises. At seven we breakfast, I then get a lesson out of the New Testament, then a Collect, and most of the Common Prayer. Then forty-two poor children come to me to read. I propose to observe the three ancient hours of prayer when at home. From nine to eleven I read the Greek Testament, according to Franks. At eleven, I go to teach the rug-maker's children to read. Twelve, dine; read Morris's 'short-hand.' Two, Greek Testament. Four, walk. Five, devotion. Six, Monday, I choose the subject beforehand. Seven, supper; and read Milton and other religious books with the family. Nine, pray for myself and friends. On Wednesday and Friday, from eight to nine, meditate on my sins; twelve to one, on Christ's sufferings; two to three, read Morris. On Sunday, spend two hours reading with the family or some poor neighbours."† By and by these Sunday readings were converted into religious meetings, at which a considerable number of persons assembled, many of whom were brought under concern for their souls. This was the commencement of the awakening in Yorkshire.

* Everett's Methodism in Sheffield, p. 7.

† Tyerman's Oxford Methodists, p. 58.

The zeal of the young graduate did not evaporate when he became an ordained clergyman, and had acquired experience by his labours in America. As soon as he returned to Ossett he renewed his efforts on a larger scale, and preached in most of the churches and chapels about Wakefield, Leeds and Halifax. The power of the divine Spirit rested upon the congregations, and not a few were convinced of sin and converted to the truth. Private religious meetings for mutual edification were multiplied, and the work of revival spread on every hand. Among others greatly benefited by Ingham's ministry, were the four daughters of the Earl of Huntingdon, the ladies Anne, Frances, Catherine and Margaret Hastings. Whilst on a visit at Ledstone Hall, in Yorkshire, they were induced by motives of curiosity to hear him preach in a neighbouring parish. He was then invited to preach in Ledsham church; and became a frequent visitor at the Hall. Lady Margaret was the first to embrace the truth, and at once interested herself for the salvation of her family and friends. Her faithful testimony soon led to the conversion of her sister-in-law, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. Conversing one day on the subject of religion, she observed, "That since she had known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation, she had been as happy as an angel." This proved a "word spoken in season"; it led to self-examination and serious enquiry; and the Countess never rested until she had obtained a like blessed experience.* "Such proceedings soon roused the envy and enmity of the clergy; and by an order made at the visitation, held at Wakefield, June 6th, 1739, Mr. Ingham was prohibited from preaching in any of the churches in the diocese of

* Tyerman's Oxford Methodists, p. 121.

York. He immediately began to preach in the fields, barns and dwelling-houses; and such was the power attending his ministrations, that there were societies formed in forty different places."* In a few months these were increased to fifty. The results following Mr. Ingham's labours were as remarkable for their rapidity as for their extent. The "word ran and was glorified" exciting the attention of the world outside; for, in November of this year, the following singular passage occurs in a letter from Halifax addressed to the editor of the "York Courant." "The spirit of enthusiasm is so spread in this neighbourhood by the preaching of the Methodists, that one half of our labouring poor that can but read a chapter of the Bible set themselves up to expound the Scriptures, and the preachers abound so much in this part of the country, that in a little time we are like to have no practisers in our woollen manufactory." Too soon the work so blessedly commenced was blighted by the introduction of the Moravian element of "stillness." Less discerning than Wesley, Ingham invited the Moravians to his assistance, and having imbibed their views, in 1741 he discarded the Methodists, separated from the Church of England, and committed himself and the management of his societies into their hands. The subsequent career of this eminently good but vacillating man, as it does not concern our history, may be summed up in a few words. Having relinquished his right to direct and govern the work he had originated, he was admitted into the Moravian Church, and elected a general overseer. In this capacity he continued his zealous labours for a few years until, in 1746, at the instance of Count von Zinzendorf, he purchased an

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, Vol. I, p. 244.

estate near Pudsey, to form a Moravian settlement, now known as "Fulneck," and as the money he advanced was not forthcoming when required, he agreed to accept a yearly rent of £30.* This, and other causes of dissatisfaction, induced him to sever his connexion with the Moravians in 1753, when he commenced an independent course of action, and formed the society known as Inghamites. By his indomitable zeal he succeeded in three or four years in gathering eighty societies, including several thousand members, and forming a circuit of about 500 miles. In an evil hour he sent two of his chief assistants into Scotland to enquire into the principles of the Glassites and Sandemanians; they returned thoroughly converted to the new system of doctrine and discipline. The result was a disastrous disruption, and out of the eighty societies only thirteen remained. To use the words of Mr. Romaine "There was a blessed work of God among these people until that horrid blast from the North came upon them and destroyed all." From this painful reverse Mr. Ingham never recovered; it seriously affected his mind, and saddened the closing years of his life. He died at Aberford near Tadcaster, in 1772, and of his once flourishing societies, as far as can be ascertained, only six are now in existence.†

* The property is now held of Ingham's descendants, on a lease for five hundred years. Methodist Magazine, Vol. LXXI, p. 1099.

† Tyerman's Oxford Methodists, p. 154.

CHAPTER II.

John Nelson, 1740—1743.

While Mr. Ingham was engaged in breaking up the fallow ground in the neighbourhood of Ossett, God was preparing the right man to cast in the precious seed, which should grow up and yield an abundant harvest. That man was John Nelson of Birstal—a stonemason by trade, whose natural constitution had in it much of the firm quality of the material with which he daily toiled. Possessed of a vigorous understanding, a strong will, and an invincible courage he had just the features of character, which when sanctified by grace fitted him for rough and painful service. His father was a piously disposed man who read the Scriptures in his family, and died with a settled reliance upon the mercy of God, and in full confidence that He would fulfil His promise to the desolate widow and fatherless children. From an early age John was the subject of deep convictions of sin, and though he knew not where to seek relief for his troubled conscience, he was too enlightened to resist wilfully the strivings of the Spirit; his gracious fears preserved him from plunging into a course of vice and folly. He married early and happily; being of sober habits, his labour amply supported him, and he and his wife lived, he says, "in a good way, as the world calls it; that is, in peace and plenty, and love to each other." On his marriage he resolved to begin a new life and aim at the glory of God, but these

good resolutions were overcome by a passionate love of hunting and shooting. He was a "lover of pleasures more than a lover of God." Finding it impossible to alter his course of life without breaking off his old associations, he removed to London, where, as he was a skilful workman, he at once obtained remunerative employment, but did not find that which he so earnestly desired. Diligent, moral, religious after a sort, he was still unhappy. In hope of learning the way of peace, he went from church to church, "but in vain"; he visited the chapels of divers dissenting denominations "but to no purpose"; he tried the Roman Catholics, "but was soon surfeited with their manner of worship." Then he says "I went to the Quakers, and prayed that God would not suffer the blind to go out of the way, but join me to that people that worshipped Him 'in spirit and truth.' I cared not what they were called, nor what I suffered on earth, so that my soul might be saved at last." The severe and painful struggle, protracted through so many years, would no doubt have terminated sooner if Nelson had come under right influence, but there was a providence in all this, God was training him for a special work. Strong natures designed to brave the fury of the storm and tempest, like the sturdy oak, require slow development. At length the day of deliverance began to dawn. In the spring of 1739 Whitefield commenced his campaign in Moorfields; Nelson was among his hearers, and thus describes the effect upon his own heart. "He was to me as a man who could play well on an instrument; for his preaching was pleasant to me: and I loved the man; so that if any one offered to disturb him, I was ready to fight for him. But I did not understand him, though I might hear him twenty times for aught I

know. Yet I got some hope of mercy: so that I was encouraged to pray on and spend my leisure hours in reading the Scriptures." As the crisis of the struggle drew near it became more severe. He could sleep but little and his rest was disturbed by terrible dreams. "Yet all this time," he says, "I was as capable of working both in understanding and strength, as ever I was in my life; and this was an encouragement to me. In all this time I did not open my mind to any person, either by word or letter; but I was like a wandering bird, cast out from the nest, till Mr. John Wesley came to preach his first sermon in Moorfields. Oh, that was a blessed morning to my soul! As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair and turned his face towards where I stood, and, I thought, fixed his eyes upon me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; and when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me. When he had done, I said 'This man can tell the secrets of my heart, but he hath not left me there; for he hath showed me the remedy; even the blood of Jesus.' Then was my soul filled with consolation, through hope that God for Christ's sake would save me; neither did I doubt in such a manner any more, till within twenty-four hours of the time when the Lord wrote a pardon on my heart."*

It was three weeks before this cheering hope of salvation was succeeded by the joy of faith. At noon, amid the calm of the Sabbath, he entered fasting into his chamber, shut to the door, and wrestled with the angel as Jacob by the brook Jabbok; resolving neither to eat bread nor

* Nelson's Journal.

drink water until he had found the blessing he sought. The struggle, which is graphically described in his journal, terminated in a believing view of Jesus Christ, "evidently set forth before his eyes as crucified for him." That evening under Mr. Wesley's sermon he "could do nothing but weep, and love and praise God for sending His servant into the fields to show him the way of salvation. All that day he neither ate nor drank"; for before he found peace the hand of God was so heavy upon him, that he refused to eat; and after he found peace, he was "so filled with the manna of redeeming love, that he had no need of the bread that perisheth, for that season."

The following year, spent partly in Surrey and partly in London, was marked by some trials both of faith and integrity, but he overcame them by fasting and prayer. Required to work on the Sabbath he chooses rather to sacrifice a lucrative position than sin against God; persecuted, he suffers it; beset by false brethren, he holds fast the truth he had received. During all this time it is remarkable that only once had he any direct intercourse with the Wesleys. One Sabbath on leaving St. Paul's he contrived to walk with John as far as Moorfields. "This" he says, "was a blessed conference to me. When we parted he took hold of my hand and looking me full in the face, bade me take care I did not quench the Spirit."

About ten days before Christmas 1740, while partaking of the Lord's Supper in St. Paul's he experienced an "awful sense" of God's presence so that his "heart was like melting wax before Him": and all his prayer was "Thy will be done!" After communicating, he says: "it was impressed on my mind, 'I must go into Yorkshire directly.' But I said in myself, 'if I do, it will be ten

pounds out of my way.' I had determined to go at May-day; but I thought, to stay for the sake of money would be wrong, when I believed it was the will of God I should go. So I packed up my clothes and set out. I found much of the Lord's presence all the way I went; but *I had no more thought of preaching than I had of eating fire.*"

Arrived at Birstal, which is nearly equidistant from Leeds, Halifax, Bradford and Wakefield, and about four miles from Ossett, Nelson was in the very midst of the work carried on by Mr. Ingham, and "found the people running from town to town, but not one in fifty knew what they went for."* His own relatives, whom he hoped to find converted, as they were attendants on Mr. Ingham's preaching, said "they had never heard of such a thing as conversion in their lives," and when he told them his own happy experience, begged him not to tell anyone that his sins were forgiven, "for no one would believe him, and they should be ashamed to show their faces in the street." Thus he stood alone, a witness for the truth that in Jesus Christ "we have redemption through His blood, even *the forgiveness* of sins." As his friends feared, his name became a reproach both among "professors and profane," and they cried, "away with such a fellow from the earth for he is not fit to live." But John Nelson was not the man to be silenced; "he believed and therefore spoke;" the ordinary result followed, and in a short time seven or eight persons accepted his testimony, and verified it in their own experience. The report of these things soon reached Mr. Ingham, who was already somewhat tinged with the Moravian spririt. Sending for John, he said, after testing his experience, "You ought not to tell people

* Methodist Magazine. Vol. XLVI, p. 235.

that they may know their sins forgiven, for the world cannot bear it; and if such a thing were preached it would raise persecution." John replied, "let them quake that fear. By the grace of God I love every man, but I fear no man; and I will tell all I can, that there is such a prize to run for. If I hide it, mischief will come upon me." In the end Mr. Ingham said, "I would not have you speak any more to the people till you are better acquainted with your own heart." John promised that he would not in *his societies* unless he was desired; but what he did in his own house, or that of any other person that requested him, Mr. Ingham had no business with.

John now had meetings in his own house every night, and in about three weeks the eight converts, who formed the first Methodist Society (proper) in Yorkshire, were increased to seventeen. Without intending it, and indeed very much against his own feelings, he became a preacher. At first he simply told those, who came to him out of curiosity, "what God had done for his soul." By and by the number of his visitors multiplied, some came to dispute, and others to enquire the way of salvation. He was thus obliged to expound the Scriptures, partly to defend his own position, and partly to encourage those who were seeking the pardon of sin, and as God accompanied His word "with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power" he soon found himself preaching. By day, he vigorously plied the mallet and the chisel; and at night, when he returned home, dispensed the living bread to the people, who crowded about his door. God gave the word and it prospered in that whereto He sent it, so that the little company of believers soon increased to thirty. It was not however without many painful conflicts that

Nelson entered upon the work to which he was manifestly called. He "craved for death, or that God would take away his speech" rather than put this responsibility upon him. In the meantime Mr. Ingham went to London, and Peter Böhler supplied his place in Yorkshire. This excellent man, in whom Nelson found a congenial spirit, not only encouraged him to proceed, but also recommended him to Mr. Ingham, who on his return sent for him and said; "John, I believe God has called you to speak His word, for I have spoken with several since I came back from London, who I believe have received grace since I went; and I see God is working in a shorter manner than He did with us at the beginning; and I should be sorry to hinder anyone from doing good." He then added aloud, "before you all I give John leave to exhort in all my societies." His fame began now to spread abroad, and the Countess of Huntingdon having heard much about him expressed a desire to see and converse with him. Accompanied by Messrs Ingham and Graves, she came to Birstal, where the former preached to a congregation of some thousands, and after he had concluded, John Nelson spoke for about half-an-hour. "The Countess was delighted, and at parting told him, with her characteristic energy, that God had called him to put his hand to the plough, and great would be his punishment, if he dared to look back for a moment; adding, with much emphasis, "He that called you is mighty to save—fear not—press forward—He will bless your testimony."*

The fraternization with Mr. Ingham did not last long. Nelson exhorted the members of the Established Church to adhere to its services and sacraments; and the Dissenters

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon. Vol. I, p. 254.

to attend their own meetings, and to let their light shine before those of their own community; Mr. Ingham advised the contrary. Hence some even of John's own spiritual children were led astray and began to neglect the means of grace. This was a sore trial and made even preaching a burden to him. On one occasion, when a large congregation was waiting for him, he fled into the fields by a woodside and falling flat on his face cried out, "Let me die! Let me die! for why should I live to see the destruction of my people? Or wherefore should I ever speak in Thy name, and by Thy word beget children for the slaughter." For nearly an hour he lay with his face on the grass, his soul filled with the deepest anguish!

Not many weeks passed before the rupture came. A great meeting of the Moravian brethren was summoned at Gommersal Field House, near Halifax, at which Mr. Ingham invited Nelson to be present. Not being able to gain access to the house because of the multitude of people, he walked into the croft, where about two hundred persons were collected, and preached to them. After a while Mr. Ingham came out and announced, that the Brethren had decided, that the young men should not expound until they had permission, for fear it should engender persecution. He then spoke to them one by one, and said: "I hope you will be obedient and not expound any more till you have orders." They all replied "Yes Sir." He then turned to Nelson saying; "John, I hope you will leave off till you have orders from the church." "No Sir," replied the sturdy mason, "I will not leave off: I dare not, for I did not begin by the order of man, nor by my own will; therefore I shall not leave off by your order: for I tell you plainly, I should have left off without your bidding, but

that I believe if I did I should be damned for disobedience." Neither entreaty nor argument could move him. For the latter, he had undoubtedly the best of it, and only consented to be still for one month with this proviso that they "could persuade the devil to be still for one month." The issue was that Mr. Ingham "charged all the people, as they loved him and the Brethren, not to let Nelson preach in their houses, nor encourage him by hearing him elsewhere."

Nelson was now alone, yet not alone, for God was with him. He continued preaching in his own house, and wherever an open door presented itself, and such was the success attending his efforts, that "many of the greatest profligates in all the country were changed; and their blasphemies turned to praise. Many of the most abandoned drunkards became sober; many Sabbath-breakers remembered the Sabbath to keep it holy. The whole town wore a new face. Such a change did God work by the artless testimony of one plain man! And from thence His word sounded forth to Leeds, Wakefield, Halifax, and all the West-riding of Yorkshire."*

The rapid growth of the work in his hands now made Nelson exceedingly desirous to have the advice and countenance of Mr. Wesley, whom he regarded as his father in the Gospel. He therefore wrote to him begging for some instructions how to proceed in the work that God had begun by such an "unpolished tool" as himself. The friend who conveyed this letter informed him by an early post that, God permitting, Mr. Wesley would be at his house on the following Tuesday. So great was his joy on receiving the news, that he "was melted into tears before the Lord." Wesley reached Birstal on Wednesday

* Wesley's Works. Volume XIII, p. 294.

evening, May 26, 1742, on his way to Newcastle. From the entry in his Journal we learn, that Nelson had some time previously applied to him for direction; but had received no reply, probably because Mr. Wesley was unwilling to commit himself to any course of action that would bear the appearance of antagonism to his old friend Mr. Ingham; and now he only makes a passing visit with the view of securing accurate information respecting the situation of affairs. The entry is as follows:—"John Nelson had wrote to me some time before, but at that time I had little thought of seeing him. Hearing he was at home I sent for him to our inn; whence he immediately carried me to his house, and gave me an account of the strange manner, wherein he had been led on, from the time of our parting in London." After a brief recital of John's story, Mr. Wesley proceeds: "I preached at noon on the top of Birstal-hill to several hundreds of plain people; and spent the afternoon *in talking severally* with those who had tasted of the grace of God. All of these, I found had been vehemently pressed, not to run about to church and sacrament but to keep their religion to themselves; *to be still;* not to talk about what they had experienced. At eight I preached on the side of Dewsbury moor, about two miles from Birstal, and earnestly exhorted all who believed to wait upon God in His own ways, and to let their light shine before men." *Journal, Vol. I, p,* 349.

That same day Mr. Ingham passed through Birstal without making any attempt to see Mr. Wesley, a circumstance that greatly surprised some who remembered how highly he had eulogised him a year or two before; but the "*still*" spirit had cast a spell around his heart. A few days later, on his return from Newcastle, Mr. Wesley

spent a week at Birstal, and took charge of the members, whom Nelson had gathered and now transferred with words as touching as they are humble to his charge, "Sir, you may make use of Jacob's words: 'The children thou hast begotten in Egypt before are mine' for I freely deliver them to your care." From this time, says Nelson "they that stayed with me were confirmed in the truth they had received; and many were convinced of the necessity of being born again; so that greater multitudes than ever came to hear and several were converted." It is difficult to determine how far Nelson had extended his labours, but as Mr. Wesley, both at Mirfield and Adwalton, conversed with "those who had tasted of the powers of the world to come," we may fairly conclude that including Birstal there were at this time at least three, if not more, societies in Yorkshire associated with Wesley.

The people now flocked to Birstal on the Sabbath from every quarter; among the first were the "three Maries" from Leeds:—Mary Shent, Mary Weddale, and Mary Maud; * who were converted under the first sermon they heard; and formed the nucleus of the first class established in that town; probably before the end of 1742, and certainly before Mr. Wesley's next visit in April, 1743. For one of the ten members composing this class, who died in York about 1818, used to say with great glee, "when Mr. Wesley first came to Leeds, we took him into society; he did not take us in." The Rev. Geo. Morley when returning from the first Missionary Meeting held in Hull in 1814, called at York to see this Christian woman, said then to be the oldest Methodist in the world, and had with her the following conversation:—"Q. Where did you first join the

* Methodism in Armley, p. 4.

Society? A. In Leeds. Q. What preachers had you then in the Leeds circuit? A. We had no travelling preachers, Leeds was not then a circuit. Q. How were you supplied with the means of grace? A. Sometimes Mr. Wesley visited us. A local preacher came once a fortnight from Birstal on the Sunday Morning: on the other Sunday evenings we held prayer-meetings among ourselves. We met our classes and went to church. Q. What collections had you in your classes? A. The same as we have now. Q. As you had no preachers to support, how was the money applied? A. I cannot tell, but it was always wanted."*

In the autumn, Charles Wesley visited Yorkshire in company with Mr. Graves. Their labours were attended with remarkable results especially at Armley, where "for a whole week together there were some that felt the atoning blood of Jesus Christ." Under Charles Wesley's preaching "many that were famous for supporting the devil's kingdom fell to the ground, as if they had been thunderstruck," and in the course of about a month "there were added to true believers near fourscore." It was probably during this gracious visitation, that William Shent was converted; for the following Christmas he invited Nelson to preach in Leeds, and provided a large empty house for the purpose. As some of the brethren apprehended violent opposition, the Friday before was spent in fasting and prayer. On the Sunday evening Nelson accompanied by several friends entered Leeds, and as they were crossing the bridge two men met them and said, "If you attempt to preach in Leeds, you need not expect to come out again alive; for there is a company of men that swear they will kill you." He replied "They must ask my Father's leave;

* Dr. Smith's History of Wesleyan Methodism, Volume I, p. 198.

for if He have any more work for me to do, all the men in the town cannot kill me till I have done it." His faith was rewarded; the house was filled with people, who "received the word with meekness." It would seem that some precious fruit was gathered, for Nelson adds, "Now the Armley Society became a nursing mother to the new-born souls at Leeds, for there were several souls at Armley, who had stood from the beginning without wavering."

On his next visit to the North which occurred early in January, 1743, Wesley commissioned John Nelson to spend a few days at Grimsby among some people that had once run well, but were turned out of the way by one from London "who had got into the poor sinnership and was made free from the righteous law of God and from all ordinances and good works." On his return, after a successful mission, he "found that God had opened the mouth of Jon. Reeves and blesst his word to numbers about Birstal." The month following, Wesley scattered a few seeds of truth as he passed near York. Feb. 18th.—"I rode forward to Newcastle. We enquired at Poppleton, a little town three miles beyond York, and hearing there was no other town near, thought it best to call there. A Bible lying in the window, my fellow-traveller asked the woman of the house if she read that book. She said, 'Sir, I can't read; the worse is my luck. But that great girl is a rare scholar; and yet she cares not if she ever looks in a book;—she minds nought but play.' I began soon after to speak to our landlord, while the old woman drew closer and closer to me. The girl spun on; but all on a sudden she stopped her wheel, burst out into tears, and with all that were in the house, so devoured our words that we scarce knew how to go away." *Journal, Vol. I, p.* 388.

CHAPTER III.

Persecution, 1743-44.

As yet Leeds is the nearest point to York in which we find a Methodist Society. Here John Wesley preached for the first time on Friday, April 8, 1743, and his brother Charles met the infant society already numbering fifty-four on Sunday, May 29th. "Not a year ago," he says, "I walked to and fro in these streets and could not find a man; but a spark is at last lit on this place also; and a great fire it will kindle." At seven, he stood before William Shent's door, and invited thousands to come and drink of the waters of life. At half-past ten he attended the "great church," and was treated with uncommon civility, shown into the Minister's pew, invited to assist at the Sacrament with eight others, placed in the position of honour, but he dreaded this sunshine more than the stones in Sheffield. At two, he exhorted a vast multitude to repent and believe, and at night, he called the poor and maimed and halt and blind of Birstal to the great Supper. The next day as he drew near Ripley his horse threw him and fell on him; but providentially the worst effect of the accident was, that it spoiled his making hymns and thinking at all till next day.* Such was Charles Wesley's experience in Yorkshire in 1743; it was widely different in 1744. The intervening year is memorable in the history of Methodism for the bitter persecution with which its advocates and members

* C. Wesley's Journal, Vol. I, p. 313.

were assailed. It seemed as if persons of every class had concerted together to crush them utterly. Clergymen railed at them from the pulpit, newswriters and pamphleteers painted them after their own fancy and laughed at the caricature they had drawn; lawless mobs pulled down their houses, plundered their property and in some cases endangered their lives; petty magistrates like Gallio, stood by, "caring for none of these things"; sometimes even encouraging the mob, and taking side with the wrong-doer.* "Some of the preachers received serious injury; others were held under water till they were nearly dead, in some places they were daubed all over with paint; in others pelted with rotten eggs, or with egg-shells filled with blood, and stopped with pitch; and even delicate women were so maltreated by the cowardly and brutal populace that they never thoroughly recovered."† All this the harmless Methodists endured with exemplary patience; they still clung to the church that reviled them, still prayed for those that despitefully used them, still inculcated loyal obedience to constituted authority, and only when compelled sought relief in the higher courts of law in which, to the honour of the Judicial Bench be it spoken, justice was never denied them.

There is little doubt that the persecutions which the early Methodists had to endure, were intensified if not occasioned by the hostile action of some of the Bishops. The following curious extract from a letter,‡ addressed by Bishop Chandler to Archdeacon Sharp, D.D., Prebendary of Durham, may be adduced in evidence. He writes, "The

* See the accounts given in the Journal of the Wesleys of the riots at Walsall, Wednesbury, Darlaston, Sheffield, &c., &c.

† Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, Vol. I, p. 255.

‡ The original is preserved at Headingley College.

spreading of the Methodists; the age, the qualifications, and manner of preaching of these young teachers, and the remedies proper to put a stop to this wild folly, hath given me some thought: but the more I think of these things the more difficulties occur to my thoughts. The lawyers do not favour proceedings, nor our law; but few of the justices will stand by us; and considering the temper of the people that are their auditors, every little restraint will be called persecution, and by experience we know that cry is wont to knit them closer, and to increase their numbers. However the method used in Cheshire, if you approve it, may be tryed in one or two places at first, when they preach at the market cross. This seems to stand clearest of the charge of persecution. But then you must be sure of the protection of the neighbouring justices and of a majority of those that usually attend the County Sessions, for, if they should oppose it and the practice be condemned at the Quarter Sessions, these boys will become very insolent and their auditors numerous and bold. I have indeed one doubt, whether a number of people gathered without arms and attempting no injury to any person, can be treated as riotous; any more than a mob about a ballad-singer, or a crowd about a mountebank, and therefore cannot advise it absolutely: but if the churchwardens or others will make the tryal they may; but in case the people will not disperse upon the reading, it will not be advisable to go further. I should have thought, which even the lawyers here do admit, that divine service performed in an unlicensed house, though the doors were open, will denominate the house a conventicle. But, since the justices are of another opinion, caution must be used to tread gently where you are sure they will not go along with

you. The act of Uniformity does not reach these miscreants; it concerns only such as do service in Churches; so I fear we are destitute of all legal means to control this strolling preaching."

In 1744 attempts were made in high quarters to repress Methodism in Yorkshire. Dr. Herring, Bishop of Bangor was elevated to the archiepiscopal see of York in April, 1743. Previous to this he had the reputation of being a man of liberal sentiments; but no sooner was he translated to the primacy, than his antipathy to the Methodists began to show itself. On the way to Armley from Adwalton, Mr. Charles Wesley was informed by Arthur Bates of Wakefield, that his minister, Mr. Arnett, had repelled him from the Sacrament; and said, he had orders from the Archbishop (Dr. Herring) so to treat all that were called Methodists. "The time" says Charles Wesley, "we know, will come when they shall put us out of the synagogues, but I much fear Mr. Arnett has slandered the good Archbishop. In Leeds, also, some begin to abuse their authority, and to exclude the true, yea the truest members of the church from her communion."* It may be doubted however whether the *good* Archbishop was altogether blameless; especially if what Mr. John Wesley states in his "Further appeal to men of reason and religion," published in December 1744, is correct. He says: "I was once inclined to believe that none would openly object against what I had anywhere said of the nature of salvation. How greatly then was I surprised some months ago, when a kind of circular letter, which one† of those whom the 'Holy Ghost hath made overseers' of His church, I am informed, had sent to all

* Charles Wesley's Journal, Vol. I, p. 351.

† Archbishop Herring.

the clergy of the diocese! Part of it ran nearly if not exactly thus: There is great indiscretion in preaching up a sort of religion, as the true Christianity, which in their own account of it consists in an enthusiastic ardour, to be understood or obtained by very few, and not to be practised without breaking in upon the common duties of life. O my Lord, what manner of words are these! Supposing candour and love out of the question, are they the words of truth? I dare stake my life upon it, there is not one true clause in all this paragraph. The propositions contained therein are these:—

(1) That the religion I preach consists in enthusiastic ardour.

(2) That it can be attained by very few.

(3) That it can be understood by very few.

(4) That it cannot be practised without breaking in upon the common duties of life.

(5) That all this may be proved by my own account of it. I earnestly entreat your Grace to review my own account of it, as it stands in any of my former writings; or to consider the short account which is given in this; and if you can thence make good any one of these propositions, I do hereby promise, before God and the world, that I will never preach more."*

Another device to ruin Methodism was to charge Wesley and his followers with treasonable negociations with the Pretender, who at this time was threatening England with invasion. Charles Wesley had the honour of being the first victim. He was then at Birstal, and had he not met the charge preferred against him with singular prudence and courage, the consequences to himself and to Methodism

* Wesley's Works, Vol. VIII, p. 56.

would have been serious. His own account of the affair is so graphic, that we quote it at some length.

"March 14. One told me there was a constable with a warrant, in which my name was mentioned. I sent for him, and he showed it me. It was to summon witnesses to some treasonable words, said to be spoken by one '*Westley*.' The poor man trembled, said he had no business with me; and was right glad to get out of my hands. He was afterwards of my audience, and wept as did most." After preaching at Leeds, where the floor of the room gave way, and some were injured but none killed, the following morning Mr. Charles rode to Wakefield, where the justices were in session. On the way he composed a hymn commencing:—

"Jesus, in this hour be near
On thy servant's side appear;
Call'd thine honour to maintain
Help a feeble child of man."*

Continuing his narrative, he says, "At eleven I waited upon Justice Burton at his inn with two other Justices, Sir Rowland Wynne and the Rev. Mr. Zouch. I told him I had seen a warrant of his, to summon witnesses to some treasonable words, said to be spoken by one *Westley;* that I had put off my journey to London, to wait upon him, and answer whatever should be laid to my charge. He answered he had nothing to say against me and I might depart. I replied, that was not sufficient without clearing my character, and that of many innocent people, whom their enemies were pleased to call Methodists. "Vindicate them!" said my brother clergyman, "that you will find a very hard task." I answered "as hard as you may think it I will engage to prove that they all, to a man, are true

* See Methodist Magazine, vol. 64. p. 672.

members of the Church of England, and loyal subjects of his Majesty King George." I then desired they would administer to me the oaths : and added " If it was not too much trouble, I could wish, gentlemen, you would send for every Methodist in England, and give them the same opportunity you do me, of declaring their loyalty upon oath."

Justice Burton said he was informed that we constantly prayed for the Pretender in all our Societies, or *nocturnal meetings*, as Mr. Zouch called them. I answered 'The very reverse is true, we constantly pray for his Majesty King George by name. These are such hymns as we sing in our Societies; a sermon I preached before the University ; another my brother preached there ; his appeals and a few more treatises containing our principles and our practice.' Here I gave them our books and was bold to say, 'I am as true a Church-of-England man and as loyal a subject as any man in the Kingdom.' 'That is impossible' they cried all ; but as it was not my business to dispute, and as I could not answer till the witnesses appeared, I withdrew without further reply.

While I waited at a neighbouring house, one of the brethren brought me the constable from Birstal, whose heart God hath touched. He told me he had summoned the principal witness, Mary Castle, on whose information the warrant was granted, and who was setting out on horseback, when the news came to Birstal that I was not gone forward to London, as they expected, but would be in Wakefield. Hearing of this she turned back, and declared to him, that she did not hear the treasonable words herself, but another woman told her so. Three more witnesses, who were to swear to my words, retracted likewise ; and

knew nothing of the matter. The fifth, good Mr. Woods, the alehouse-keeper, is forthcoming it seems in the afternoon.

Now I plainly see the consequence of my not appearing here to look my enemies in the face. Had I gone on my journey, here would have been witnesses enough, and oaths enough, to stir up a persecution against the Methodists. I took the witnesses' names, Mary Castle, W. Walker, Lionel Knowles, Arthur Furth, Jos. Woods; and a copy of the warrant as follows :—

'West Riding of Yorkshire.—To the Constable of Birstal, in the said Riding, or deputy.—These are in his Majesty's name to require and command you, to summon Mary Castle of Birstal aforesaid, and all other such persons as you are informed can give any information against one *Westley*, or any other of the Methodist speakers, for speaking any treasonable words, or exhortations; as praying for the banished, or for the Pretender, &c.; to appear before me and other His Majesty's Justices of the peace for the said Riding, at the White-hart in Wakefield, on the 15th of March instant by ten o'clock in the forenoon, to be examined, and to declare the truth of what they and each of them know touching the premises; and that you make a return hereof before us on the same day. Given under my hand the 10th of March, 1744. E. Burton.'

Between two and three, honest Mr. Woods came, and started back at the sight of me, as if he had trod upon a serpent. One of our brothers took hold on him; and told me, he trembled every joint of him. The Justices' clerk had bid the Constable bring him to *him* as soon as ever he came: but notwithstanding all the clerk's instructions, Woods frankly confessed, now he was come, he had

nothing to say, and would not have come at all *had they not forced* him.

I waited at the door, where the Justices were examining the disaffected, until seven. I took public notice of Mr. Oberhausen, the Moravian Teacher, but not of Mr. Kendrick. When all their business was over, and I had been insulted at their door from eleven in the morning till seven at night, I was sent for and asked, 'what would Mr. Wesley desire?' *Wesley*—'I desire nothing, but to know what is alleged against me.' Justice Burton said, 'what hope of truth from him? He is another of them.' Then addressing himself to me: 'Here are two of your brethren; one so silly, it is a shame he should ever set up for a teacher; and the other has told us a thousand lies and equivocations upon oath. He has not wit enough, or he would make a complete Jesuit.' I looked round and said, 'I see none of my brethren here, but this gentleman;' pointing to the reverend Justice; who looked as if he did not thank me for claiming him. *Burton*—'Why, do you not know this man?' showing me Kendrick. *Wesley*—'Yes Sir, very well: for two years ago I expelled him our society in London for setting up for a Preacher.' To this poor Kendrick assented, which put a stop to further reflections on the Methodists.

Justice Burton then said, I might depart; for they had nothing against me. *Wesley*—'Sir, that is not sufficient. I cannot depart till my character is fully cleared. It is no trifling matter. Even my life is concerned in this charge.' *Burton*—'I did not summon you to appear.' *Wesley*—'I was the person meant by '*one Westley*:' and my supposed words were the occasion of your order, which I read signed by your name.' *Burton*—'I will not deny my order, I did

send to summon the witnesses.' *Wesley*—'Yes, and I took down their names from the constable's paper. The principal witness, Mary Castle, was setting out, but hearing that I was here, she turned back and declared to the constable she only heard another say that I spoke treason. Three more of the witnesses recanted for the same reason; and Mr. Woods, who is here, says he has nothing to say, and should not have come either, had he not been *forced by the minister.* Had I not been here, he would have had enough to say; and ye would have had witnesses and oaths enough. But I suppose my coming has prevented their's.' One of the Justices added, 'I suppose so too.'

They all seemed fully satisfied, and would have had me so too; but I insisted upon their hearing Mr. Woods. *Burton*—'Do you desire he may be called as an evidence for you'? *Wesley*—'I desire he may be heard as an evidence against me; if he has aught to lay to my charge. Then Mr. Zouch asked Woods, what he had to say: what were the words I spoke. Woods was as backward to speak as they to hear him; but was at last compelled to say, 'I have nothing to say against the gentleman. I only heard him pray that the Lord would call home His banished.' *Zouch*—'But were there no words before or after, which pointed to these troublous times?' *Woods*—'No, none at all.' *Wesley*—'It was on February 12th before the earliest news of the invasion. But if folly and malice may be interpreters, any words, which any of you gentlemen speak, may be construed into treason.' *Zouch*—'It is very true.' *Wesley*—'Now, gentlemen, give me leave to explain my own words. I had no thought of praying for the Pretender, but for those that confess themselves strangers and pilgrims upon earth, who seek a country knowing this

is not their place. The Scriptures, you, Sir, know (to the clergyman) speak of us as captive exiles, who are absent from the Lord while in the body. We are not at home till we are in heaven.' *Zouch*—'I thought you would so explain the words; and it is a fair interpretation.' I asked if they were all satisfied. They said they were, and cleared me as fully as I desired.

I then asked them again to administer to me the oaths. Mr. Zouch looked on my sermon; asked who ordained me, (the Archbishop and Bishop of London the same week) and said, with the rest, it was quite unnecessary, since I was a clergyman and student at Christ-church, and had preached before the University and taken oaths before. Yet I motioned it again, till they acknowledged in explicit terms 'my loyalty unquestionable.' I then presented Sir Rowland and Mr. Zouch with the Appeal, and took my leave.

Half-an-hour after seven we set out for Birstal, and a joyful journey we had. Our brethren met us on the road and we gathered together on the hill, and sang praises lustily, with a good courage. Our enemies were rising at Birstal full of the Wednesbury devil, on presumption of my not finding justice at Wakefield, wherein they were more confirmed by my delay. They had begun pulling down John Nelson's house, when our singing damped and put them to flight. Now I see, if I had not gone to confront my enemies, or had been evil intreated at Wakefield, it might have occasioned a general persecution here, which the Lord hath now crushed in the birth. No weapon that is formed against us shall prosper, and every tongue that shall arise against us in judgment we shall condemn."

Wesley indited another hymn—a song of triumphant

thanksgiving after his return, which ends with the following verse:

"Thou, my great Redeeming God,
My Jesus still art near;
Kept by Thee, nor secret fraud,
Nor open force I fear:
Safe amidst the snares of death,
Guarded by the King of kings,
Glad to live and die beneath
The shadow of Thy wings."*

One of the principal agents in this plot to ruin Charles Wesley, and through him damage Methodism, was the *Reverend* Mr. Coleby, vicar of Birstal, and also a magistrate. The words so easily construed into treason were uttered at Birstal, and it was the minister of Birstal who *forced* Woods the publican to appear as evidence. A few weeks later this teacher of religion and guardian of law was concerned in acts of persecution still more criminal. It was he who by wilful misrepresentation procured the committal of John Nelson for military service, which by the providence of God instead of injuring Methodism became the means of its introduction into York. It is a curious coincidence that just at this time the "good Archbishop," who had directed the expulsion of the Methodists from the Lord's table, and issued a circular caricaturing the teaching of Wesley, was zealously engaged in the formation of a regiment to fight the Pretender,—a service for which he was rewarded by being raised to the see of Canterbury in 1747.† Whether this had anything to do with Nelson's arrest, it is impossible to say. His avowed enemies were the vicar, and the publicans whose gains had been seriously diminished by his successful ministrations.

* Methodist Magazine. Vol. LXIV, p. 675.

† Methodist Magazine, Vol. XCVIII, p. 599.

The story of Nelson's being pressed for a soldier is so well known that here a brief resumé is all that is necessary. On Friday, May 4, though forewarned, he preached at Adwalton; and was arrested immediately after he had done. A wealthy gentleman, Mr. Charlesworth, offered £500 bail for him until next day, but it was refused. The following day he was brought before the commissioners at Halifax; they sat with closed doors, and though a number of testimonies to his good position and character were sent in by gentlemen of the neighbourhood, Nelson was committed on the sole assertion of Mr. Coleby, who acted as accuser and judge, that he had no visible means of getting a living. This was an audacious falsehood, for he was then in full work and earning his bread with "the sweat of his face," but he was a Methodist preacher and must be got rid of. Amid the tears of many in Halifax he was dragged away to Bradford, where, contrary to all justice and law, he and an unfortunate companion in tribulation were cast into the dungeon without any accommodation except a little foul straw. A soldier who knew the loathsomeness of the place, begged the captain to allow him to take charge of Mr. Nelson, and he would be responsible for his appearance on the following morning. For this act of humanity the captain threatened to break his head. His *orders* were to put John in the dungeon—a place "that stunk worse than a hog-stye," because of the blood and filth that percolated from a slaughter-house above. Even a little water was denied him, though he had tasted nothing all day saving a cup of tea in the morning; yet, says John, "my soul was so filled with the love of God, that it was a paradise to me." Late in the night some humane person brought him food and candles: and one man, who was no friend

to the Methodists, when he perceived the unsavouriness of the place, exclaimed, "Humanity moves me," and instantly going to the captain he offered a bail of £10, and himself as prisoner, if he would allow John to sleep in a bed, but in vain. At four next morning his wife, accompanied by a few friends, came and conversed with him through the hole in his prison door, "Fear not" said this brave woman, "the cause is God's, and He will plead it Himself. Therefore be not concerned about me and the children; for He that feeds the young ravens will be mindful of us; and He will give you strength for the day." At five, he was guarded to Leeds and consigned to the jail; here again attempts were made to bail him out, but though as much as £100 was offered, they were unsuccessful. The good-natured jailor however permitted his friends to visit him, and in the evening not less than a hundred persons gathered within the prison walls for exhortation, prayer and praise.

On Monday morning he was marched off to York, many of the brethren accompanying him for several miles. On reaching the city he was conducted to the Black Swan in Coney Street, into the presence of a company of officers, "who rejoiced as men that had taken great spoil, and saluted him with oaths." John, who was not the man to be silent under such circumstances, boldly reproved them; and as he began to reason with them about a future state, one of them said "You must not preach here; you are sent to us to be a soldier and must not talk so to your officers." He answered, "There is but one way to prevent me." "What is that?" they asked. He replied, "It is to swear no more in my hearing."

Nelson's fame had gone before him, so that the streets

and windows were filled with people, who wished to catch a sight of him, as he was marched to the guard-house. Here he was offered the King's "bounty," which he stoutly refused to accept, and was consequently committed to prison. During his incarceration several of the citizens came, and questioned him respecting the doctrines of the Methodists; to these he "opened the Scriptures" and convincingly set forth the fundamental principles of the sect which was everywhere spoken against. On the third day he was summoned before a court martial, but neither threats nor entreaties could induce him to take the service-money. Well they said, "if you run away, you are as liable to suffer, as if you had taken our money." He replied, "if I cannot be discharged lawfully, I shall not run away; if I do, punish me as you please." He was then ordered to his quarters, where he was kindly treated by his host, and allowed a room and bed to himself.

In the intervals of military exercise persons of all classes came to see him, some to enquire and others to dispute; but everyway the truth began to spread, and much prejudice was removed for "the people of York looked upon a Methodist as one who had the plague and infected all whom he came near; they even blessed God that none had come to preach there." Among his other visitors were two clergymen whose objections were silenced by his ready wit, and apposite quotations from the Bible and Book of Common Prayer. In his novel position, while strictly conforming to military rule, for conscience sake, he neglected no opportunity of warning, teaching, and exhorting all with whom he came in contact; and in not a few instances seed was sown that yielded precious fruit. Speaking of the soldiers among whom his lot was thus strangely cast he remarks:

"I may indeed say, I have fought with beasts at York, for so these men live. Yet my speaking to them was not in vain; for they bridled their tongues in my presence after the first twenty-four hours. When they spake any blasphemous words, if I did but turn and look them in the face, they looked like criminals before the magistrate."

The few Sabbaths he spent in York were well employed in the Master's service. On Sunday morning, May 13th, he attended the church in Coney Street, where "the Lord manifested Himself to him in great love at the Sacrament." In the evening he retired with a few Christian brethren, who had come from a distance to cheer him, into the fields, for the purpose of religious intercourse and prayer. As they were observed a crowd of nearly a hundred persons soon gathered, to whom, after singing, he gave an exhortation. Walking a mile in another direction a still larger company collected and begged him to preach. When he had finished, several cried out, "This is the doctrine which ought to be preached, let men say what they will about it." How he spent the following Sabbath we are not informed save that he found comfort in the sacrament. On the 27th he preached on Heworth moor at 7-30 a.m. to three hundred "well-behaved people, who entreated him to speak to them again at night," when he found an "unexpected congregation of nearly six thousand people;" but as a number of drunken soldiers threatened a disturbance, he prudently refrained. Such proceedings were not likely to pass unnoticed; some clergymen complained to the officers, and the following night one sent for him and said: "What, you cannot leave off preaching yet, but we must be blamed about you? If you preach publicly again, you shall be severely whipped." His answer was: "I am

not careful in this matter. It is better to obey God than man!" With many threats he was dismissed, yet the following evening according to promise he preached at Acomb to "almost all the inhabitants of the village." "The Lord," he says, "gave me power to speak His word freely and sent it with power to their hearts: the rock was struck and the water gushed out; all whom I saw behaved well." The next Sunday morning he preached once more on Heworth moor to a considerable congregation, but had scarcely returned to the city, when the ensign sent for him and swore that "he would have no more preaching and praying in the regiment." John boldly replied, "Then Sir, you ought to have no swearing nor cursing either; for surely I have as much right to pray and preach as you have to curse and swear." The ensign swore that he should be "damnably" whipped, and cried "Corporal, put this fellow in prison directly." The corporal said, "Sir, I must not carry a man to prison, unless I give in his crime with him." "Well" said he, "it is for disobeying orders." John was kept in prison nearly three days; during which "his soul was as a watered garden, and he sang praises to God all the day long." On Tuesday evening he was brought before the major; several young officers were present, who seemed to rejoice in the expectation that John would now get his promised flogging. The major called, "John Nelson, what were you put in prison for?" "For warning people to flee from the wrath to come," said John; "and if this be a crime, I shall commit it again, unless you cut my tongue out, for it is better to die than disobey God." "Well, but if that be all," he replied, "it is no crime; for when you have done your duty, I do not care if you preach every night in a house, or any private

place out of the town. But I would not have you make any mobs." "That" said I, "is far from my design." "Well," said he, "you may go home to your quarters: and if I have a convenient time, I will send for you and hear you myself; for I wish all men were like you."

Two days after, the regiment was ordered to Sunderland, so Nelson's labours in York terminated for a time. Many regretted his leaving and expressed a desire that Wesley would come. They said "we expected some of you two or three years ago; but you had no regard for our souls *till God brought you by force.*" Nelson exclaims, "O the tenderness which this people showed, and their desire for the word of God! It moved me to cry out 'Lord have mercy on them, and let them hear Thy Gospel, and find it Thy power unto salvation!'"

While Nelson was in York, Wesley visited Birstal and found the brethren partly mourning and partly rejoicing on Nelson's account.* From thence he sent the following words of consolation. "Well, my brother, is the God whom you serve able to deliver you? and do you find Him faithful to His word? Is His grace sufficient for you? I doubt it not. He will not suffer you to be weary, or faint in your mind. But He had work for you to do that you knew not of, and thus His counsel was to be fulfilled. O lose no time. Who knows how many souls God may by this means deliver into your hands? Shall not all these things be for the furtherance of the Gospel? And is not the time coming when we shall cry out together, 'Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us?'" †

* Wesley's Journal, Vol. I, p. 439.

† Wesley's Works, Vol. XIII, p. 152.

CHAPTER IV.

The Yorkshire Round, 1744—1747.

On the 28th of July, three months after his arrest, Nelson was set at liberty, it is said through the intervention of the Countess of Huntingdon; yet not as an act of justice, but by means of a substitute hired to take his place. The money was probably contributed by the Methodists in London at the suggestion of Charles Wesley, who under date *June* 6, says: "Toward the end of my discourse at the chapel, Mr. Erskine was sent to receive a soldier brought by Wm. Shent to redeem John Nelson. He immediately took him to Lord Stairs and got a discharge for John Nelson." This was six weeks before he was actually liberated! "Some time after," probably in Autumn, Nelson revisited York and found that the seed sown during his captivity had sprung up; "for nineteen had found peace with God, and twice as many were under convictions." No doubt it was at this time the first class was formed; it was led by Thos. Slaton of Acomb, very probably in his own house, for in the earliest "Minutes of Conference" Acomb is expressly mentioned as a part of the "Yorkshire Round" before York is recognised at all.

It will not be out of place here to give some explanation of the term "Round," which though strictly synonymous with the word circuit, meant something very different from the circuit of to-day. When the "United Societies" began to be too numerous and widely extended to be under the

direct personal supervision of Mr. Wesley, it became necessary for him to employ "assistants," whom he appointed to go "the round" of the societies in a particular locality. It is easy to see that at first both Assistants and Rounds were variable at Mr. Wesley's pleasure. Hence in the minutes of the first Conference held in 1744, there is no list either of preachers or places; only certain principles are laid down by which those whom he thought proper to use, were to be guided. These are summed up in the comprehensive rule, "Act in all things not according to your own will but *as a Son in the Gospel*. As such it is your part to employ your time in that manner that we direct; partly in visiting the flock from house to house, the sick in particular; partly in such a course of reading, meditation and prayer as we advise from time to time. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is *needful* you should do that part of the work which we direct, at *those times* and *places* which we judge most for His glory."* In the beginning of Methodism these were no vain words; Mr. Wesley sent his "assistants" to itinerate in Yorkshire or Cornwall or in the country round Bristol for a few weeks or months as he thought it most expedient. They had no settled dwelling-place, and were strictly charged to receive no money. The society met their necessary wants, providing board and lodging when they came, and defraying the expense of their horses if they had any. On the other hand the assistant might carry on his business, and was under no obligation to travel longer than he found it convenient to do so, or felt it his duty to devote himself to the work. This explains the form of the question put in the Minutes of 1745, where we have the first list of Mr.

* Minutes, Vol. I. new edition.

Wesley's lay helpers. It is: "Who are our *present* assistants?" Fourteen are mentioned, who were no doubt willing to go wherever they might be sent; but there were many others who laboured as opportunity served in their own locality.

The following year we have the first list of circuits or rather rounds, but without any fixed appointments.* The whole of England and Wales was divided into seven large districts the extent of which may be inferred from the fact that the Yorkshire Round included Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland and Lincolnshire. In this wide area the assistants were expected to visit all the societies at least once in the year, and to make a monthly report either to John or Charles Wesley. In 1748 the Yorkshire Round was greatly contracted but still included Leeds, Birstal, Keighley, *Acomb*, Sykehouse, Epworth, Hainton, Grimsby and the Fens. In all these places and some others societies had been established, and were more or less flourishing, but the fact that Acomb is specially mentioned and not York, may be taken as a proof that the society in the city, though formed in 1747, was yet exceedingly small.

* A MS. copy of some of the early minutes, which appears to have been corrected by Mr. Wesley, is preserved at Headingley College. From this we find the appointment of the assistants was contingent, and only for a few months. In 1746 the question occurs: "How may the journeys of our assistants be fixed for the ensuing three months? Ans.: So far as we can yet perceive thus:" then follows a list of appointments, in which only the initials of the preachers are given. Those for Yorkshire are: "June, J. H(aughton), J. B(ennett); July, J. H(aughton), J. B(ennett) and J. W(heatley); August, J. J(ones), J. N(elson) and J. W(heatley)." In 1747 the time is extended to two months and the appointment is: July and August, T. Westall, John Bennett; September and October, T. Meyrick, Jas. Jones; November and December, J. Bennett and——.

Among the preachers who at this early period laboured on the Yorkshire Round there were besides Nelson; Jon. Reeves, Wm. Shent, Alex. Coates, Jon. Maskew, Wm. Darney and Fras. Scott. Jon. Reeves was the friend of Nelson, and like him had the honour of being imprisoned for the sake of the Gospel. In December 1745 the Reverend Hy. Wickham, justice of the peace for the West Riding, committed him to York Castle on the suspicion "of being a spy and a dangerous man to the person and government of His Majesty King George."* His real offence was calling sinners to repentance.

Wm. Shent was a popular barber in Leeds; and no doubt gifted with the loquacity of his profession. As soon as he was converted he could not refrain from telling his customers whether rich or poor the good news that his sins were forgiven. This, says Nelson, "made a great uproar in Leeds;" and contributed much to the early establishment of Methodism in that neighbourhood. Shent must have been endued with more than ordinary power. Once after he had been preaching in Mr. Grimshaw's kitchen, that good man fell down before the humble itinerant saying: "I am not worthy to stand in your presence." He also was pressed for a soldier but was set at liberty through the interest of the Countess of Huntingdon, who often spoke of him as the "guileless Israelite."†

Alex. Coates was distinguished as a very holy man and an able and popular preacher. Jon. Maskew and Wm. Darney, both resident in Haworth, were known as Grimshaw's men. The former is described as a plain and pathetic preacher generally acceptable and useful to many.

* Wesley's Works, Vol. 8, p. 238.

† Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, Vol. 1, p. 291.

Mr. Wesley used to say that "ten such preachers as Jon. Maskew would carry the world before them." After itinerating a few years he settled at Dainhead near Rochdale, where he continued to labour as a successful local preacher until he reached the advanced age of fourscore years. When he was no longer able to preach in a standing posture he sat, and while the tears ran down his venerable cheeks he entreated sinful men to accept the mercy of God, and wash their garments in the blood of the Lamb. The latter "was a man possessed of few personal attractions, of a broad Scottish dialect and, when dwelling on the terrors of the Lord, terrible to behold; but a man of deep piety, plain sense, and a burning zeal, with a courage that fearlessly defied all opposition." "His popularity was not diminished by his frequently, at the close of his sermon, giving out an extemporary hymn, adapted to the subject upon which he had been discoursing."* Mr. Grimshaw derived much benefit from his intercourse with Darney and greatly esteemed him. This good man was likewise imprisoned for preaching.

Francis Scott was a joiner and cabinet-maker in Wakefield. His brother John, also a local preacher, was his foreman and took the management of the business while he was away preaching. Not unfrequently he was out ten days or a fortnight together, riding his own horse and defraying his own expenses. He would gladly have given his brother half his business, but John said "No, I would rather decline, as I can now put off the world every Saturday night with my apron."

Such were some of the earnest men who first travelled the Yorkshire round, going about the towns and villages

* Everett's Methodism in Manchester, p. 32.

teaching and preaching the Gospel:—men who braved the storm of persecution, but on whose lips the thirsting multitude hung with delight and profit. The list however would scarcely be complete without some notice of the Rev. Wm. Grimshaw, the estimable incumbent of Haworth. After his conversion he became a mighty instrument in promoting the Methodist revival. Besides fulfilling the duties of a large parish, which under his diligent cultivation, from being a moral desert, began to bloom as the garden of the Lord; he "formed two circuits which, with some occasional variation, he usually traced every week alternately. One of these he often pleasantly called his idle week because he seldom preached more then twelve or fourteen times. His sermons, in his working or busy week, often exceeded the number of twenty-four and sometimes amounted to thirty."* "Without partiality" he was a lover of all good men, who sought to exalt the common Saviour and rescue the perishing. The Wesleys, Whitefield, and Ingham were alike welcome to his pulpit; and the humbler lay brethren, Shent, Darney, and Coates were as warmly received in his kitchen. In 1745 he united himself more closely to the Methodists. Having recently visited Wm. Darney's societies so called, and also those under the care of John Bennett in Lancashire and Cheshire, he thus writes to Mr. Wesley, "I am determined to add, by divine assistance, to the care of my own parish, that of so frequent visitation of Mr. Bennett's, Wm. Darney's, the Leeds and Birstal Societies, as my own convenience will permit, and their circumstances may respectively seem to require; all along eyeing the Lord's will and purposes for me. If I find the Lord's pleasure be that I must

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, Vol. I, p. 253.

launch out further, I will obey; for He daily convinces me more and more of what He has graciously done and will do for my soul." He adds, "I bless God I can discover no other at present but a very perfect agreement between your sentiments, principles, &c., of religion and my own; and therefore desire you will (as I do to you) from time to time, lay before me such rules, places, proposals, &c., as you conceive most conducive to the welfare of the church, the private benefit of her members, and in the whole to the glory of the Lord. My pulpit, I hope, shall be always at your's and your brother's service; and my house, so long as I have one, your welcome home. The same I'll make it to your fellow-labourers, through the grace of God."* To Mr. Grimshaw's care the supervision of the Yorkshire round was largely committed, and he discharged the trust with singular zeal and fidelity. He visited the classes quarterly and renewed the tickets; he attended and preached at the quarterly meetings and held lovefeasts in the societies. When a preacher came, he entertained him at his own house and gave notice of the Methodist services in his church; and at last built a chapel and dwelling house for them at his own expense. If all clergymen had acted with equal wisdom and Christian charity, who can tell what might have been the result to-day?

Whitefield, on one of his visits to Haworth selected for his text, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment." A solemn silence followed the announcement of these words, which was broken by a wild and terrifying shriek from the centre of the crowd. Mr. Grimshaw hurried to the spot, and in a few moments

* Dr. Smith's History of Methodism, Vol. I, p. 240.

turning to Mr. Whitefield, cried out, "Brother Whitefield you stand amongst the dead and dying—an immortal soul has been called into eternity,—the destroying angel is passing over the congregation; cry aloud, and spare not." When the excitement occasioned by this awful occurrence had a little subsided, Mr. Whitefield announced his text a second time, "It is appointed unto men once to die." Again a loud and piercing shriek was heard proceeding from near the spot where the Countess of Huntingdon and Lady Ingham were standing; a thrill of horror ran through the assembled throng,—a second person had fallen, and the thought involuntarily arose, Am I to be the next? As soon as circumstances permitted, Whitefield proceeded in a strain of overwhelming eloquence, intensified by the actual presence of death, amid the awful hush of the paralysed multitude, to warn the careless Christless sinner to flee from the wrath to come.*

Having thus rapidly surveyed the Yorkshire Round, and the prominent figures moving within its limits, it is time to pursue the thread of our story. Soon after Nelson had formed the society in Acomb he preached for the first time in Ulleskelf, a village in the neighbourhood of Tadcaster, which for eighty years belonged to the York circuit. He observes: "On my journey to the place where I was going, I called at a gentleman's house where there was much company, and he insisted I should stay and dine with him." This was Edward Leeds, Esq., from Royd's Hall, near Birstal, but then resident at Milford Hall, near Ulleskelf. After dinner Mr. Leeds of his own accord accompanied the preacher to the village to protect him from the rudeness of the mob; Nelson took his stand in

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon. Vol. I, p. 265.

the open air and proclaimed to a large congregation the unsearchable riches of Christ. Some of these "Christian savages" came with the full intention of fighting for the Church which they supposed to be in danger. One of the most active was Geo. Tricket, a farmer in the village, who had filled his pockets with stones, and went to the place ready prepared for action; but seeing Mr. Leeds, who was a magistrate, standing by Mr. Nelson, he did not venture to commence hostilities at once, but waited for a favourable opportunity. While thus in suspense the word was striking home, and the light of divine truth pierced through the darkness of his soul. He felt himself a sinner and stood like a condemned criminal before his judge. He dropped the stones behind him one after another, unobserved, but could not so easily shake off his sense of guilt, for when he had cast away his "carnal weapons" he fell to the ground and gave vent to his feelings by crying aloud for mercy. He became an eminently holy man and was a useful class leader in Ulleskelf for nearly fifty years. Though Mr. Leeds never became a member of the society, he was always friendly, and through his influence, persecution in his neighbourhood was never allowed to rear its head, so that Ulleskelf was to some of the first preachers a safe asylum from the malice of their foes. When persecution raged at York and at many other places, here they were always protected and found a welcome retreat: and it is worthy of remark that Milford Hall, although it repeatedly changed its occupants, was for a long period distinguished as a house of prayer.*

About the same time, 1744-5, Mrs. Martha Thompson, a widow lady who possessed a considerable estate at

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. L. p. 833.

Rufforth, two and a half miles from Acomb, opened her house to receive the Methodist preachers, and appears to have used her influence to obtain their admission into York, which the determined opposition of the good Archbishop and his clergy, seemed to have surrounded with munitions firmer than its ancient walls. This lady was the daughter of religious parents, and from a child had known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make one wise unto salvation. Thus her heart was gradually opened, and before the coming of the Methodists she had become experimentally acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus. In an account sent to Mr. Wesley she writes: "The first preacher I heard I did not rightly comprehend his doctrine, but his deportment much affected me; there appeared such a solemn reverence of God in his very looks as I had never seen in any person before. Mr. Shent, of Leeds, was the next preacher who came this way. I was so astonished with the heavenly truths he unfolded, that I was almost lost in wonder, love and praise. I invited them to my house, and the Lord opened my understanding to know what He had formerly wrought in my heart. I was kept in wonderful peace and refreshed with the comforts of His Spirit. They not only preached justification by faith in Christ Jesus, but sanctification through the influence of His Spirit. This was an additional blessing to me, who had been so long complaining of the remains of sin. . . I was greatly animated with love and zeal for God's glory and the salvation of souls, and procured the preachers to visit every place where my friends lived, that would receive them; and praised be the Lord, the word proved to be the savour of life to many souls. Several years were thus employed

and the preaching was established in the city of York though not without difficulty." *

From the foregoing extract we gather that Acomb was now, at intervals, regularly visited by the preachers from Leeds, Birstal and other places; also that Methodism had been successfully introduced into other villages in the vicinity of York, but hitherto all attempts to establish preaching in the city had failed. Some powerful opposition arrested Methodism at the gates. At length in 1747, the very year that Archbishop Herring was translated to Canterbury, it found an entrance within the walls. Wesley, whose coming was so earnestly desired three years before, paid his first recorded visit on February 27th; his words imply an earlier appearance, of which there is no mention in his Journal, for some whom he had met before had erred from the truth. He says: "Honest muddy M.B. conducted me to his house at Acomb. I now found out (which I could not comprehend before) what was the matter with him. He and one or two more, since I saw them last, had been studying the profound Jacob Behmen. The event was (as might easily have been foreseen) he had utterly confounded their intellects, and filled them so full of sublime speculations that they had left Scripture and common sense far behind.

I preached at seven on 'Repent ye and believe the Gospel.' The congregation, many of whom came from York, was surprisingly quiet. Though I used the utmost plainness of speech, several of York came again at five in the morning. After preaching, I spoke with a few who were desirous to join heart and hand together in seeking the Kingdom of God." *Journal, Vol. II, p.* 46.

* Arminian Magazine, Vol. VI, p. 471.

This was the commencement of the York Society, which numbered at first less than half a dozen members and was conducted by Thos. Slaton of Acomb. Wesley proposed to return in April on his way back from Newcastle, but a brutal assault made upon John Nelson by a York mob which nearly deprived him of his life, accompanied with threats that they would treat Wesley in the same manner if he came, rendered it prudent for him to alter his course. The account of this dastardly attack upon an inoffensive man, led on by a number of persons miscalled *gentlemen* is abridged from Nelson's Journal. The fact that such things were possible incontrovertibly proves, that in York at that time there needed a religion, which not only taught morality and Christian practice, but which could produce it.

It was Passion-week. On Good-Friday morning Nelson preached on Heworth moor to a serious and peaceable people, announcing that he would preach again on Easter Sunday. He then proceeded to a village three miles from York, where he had a large and well-behaved congregation. When Sunday came he found two companies assembled on the moor, one to hear and the other to mob. In the midst of his discourse a man, who otherwise would have been taken for a gentleman, gave the signal and shouted : "Knock out the brains of that mad dog," and literally "gnashed upon him with his teeth." Instantly followed a shower of stones and other missiles, which hit many of the people, but Nelson was untouched. Volley after volley succeeded and the congregation was compelled to disperse. The mob followed, and as he was nearing the city a piece of brick struck him on the back of the head, and felled him to the ground. Two of the brethren from Acomb

lifted him up, but he was not able to stand for some time, and the blood ran down his back into his very shoes. Crossing the bridge, the mob still at his heels, a good Samaritan took him by the hand and said "What is the matter? why do you bleed so?" One of the crowd replied, "This is but little to what we will do to him." On this the good man drew him into his house, which was hard by. The mob threatened to break his windows. The brave response was, "if you do not disperse immediately some of you shall be in the castle before an hour's end." They now quickly took to their heels and fled.

The surgeon was sent for to dress his wounds and, after resting a while, Thos. Slaton brought his horse and he rode to Acomb, where he had engaged to preach at five o'clock. When the hour arrived ten young men, who wore the garb of gentlemen, came in a coach bringing with them two roughs who swore they would kill him outright. While the ten *gentlemen* amused themselves with singing ribald songs and pelting the women who were gathered together, the two big bullies sought for Nelson, who was walking with two of the brethren in a little field behind the house. When they found him one of them deliberately pulled off his hat and wig, and giving them to the other swore, "If I do not kill him I will be d——d." He then rushed fiercely at him with his head, intending to throw him down, but Nelson deftly stepped aside, and he pitched headlong upon the ground. When he got up, Nelson quietly asked him, "What he had done amiss?" but without answering, the man again violently attacked him, and seizing him by the collar of his shirt, which rent in pieces, fell a second time. Rising to his feet he made a third attack, and as Nelson offered no resistance, he succeeded in throwing

him down and then leaped with his knees on his body several times, until he had deprived him of breath and caused his wounds to bleed afresh. Not content with the mischief he had done, he seized one of the friends, threw him against the corner of a wall, and broke two of his ribs. Then he went to those who had hired him and said, "Gentlemen, I have killed the preacher: he lies dead in the croft." "Well," said the parson's brother who was one of them, "we will see for ourselves, we will not take your word." They came and found John lying in his blood on the ground, but yet breathing. One said, "he will die if he lies there." On this they lifted him up and said, "we will help you into the house." As soon as he was able to speak, John said, "Your mercy is only to make way for greater cruelty. Gentlemen, if I have done anything contrary to law, let me be punished by the law. I am a subject of King George; and to his law I appeal; and I am willing to go before my Lord Mayor as he is the King's magistrate." But they cursed him and the King too in language too vile to repeat. The "parson's" brother swore and said, "according to your preaching, you would prove our ministers to be blind guides and false prophets; but we will kill you as fast as you come." Another said: "If Wesley comes on Tuesday he shall not live another day in this world."

When he was got into the street they set up a loud huzzah, and commenced anew their barbarous treatment, that it is marvel he survived. One of them said, "I have heard that a cat has nine lives but I think *he* has nine score." Eight times they knocked him down, and when he could rise no more some of them dragged him by the hair of his head over the stones nearly twenty yards, while

others kicked him with their feet. Six of them got on his body and thighs, blasphemously saying they would tread the Holy Spirit out of him. At last they bid him order his horse for they said, "you shall go before we leave you," and as he declined to do this they threatened to put him into the draw-well, and actually attempted to do so; but were prevented by a courageous woman, who stood by the well, and pushed several of them down so that they could not accomplish their purpose. At this juncture two ladies appeared and called two of the ruffians by name. Confounded and ashamed they let poor John go; his friends came and, having assisted him into the house, ministered to his relief. The mob returned to York singing "debauched songs," and one of them, who had the name of a gentleman, as he got into the coach was overheard to say: "It is impossible for him to live and if John Wesley comes on Tuesday we will kill him. Then we shall be rid of the Methodists for ever; for no one will dare to come if they two be killed." Had not Nelson's constitution been uncommonly vigorous, or rather had not God mercifully sustained him, he must have succumbed under such savage cruelty: but marvellous to relate, after taking a powerful sudorific, and a good night's rest, he was so far recovered next day, that although still very sore he rode forty miles to meet Mr. Wesley at Osmotherby.

CHAPTER V.

The Bedern, 1747—1752.

In the city of York, and almost within the shadow of the Minster, there is a little street leading from Goodramgate to St. Andrewgate, called the Bedern. Until very recently it afforded no thoroughfare, and a stranger might have passed the end of it without being aware of its existence; certainly without suspecting that he was passing a spot memorable in Roman and Ecclesiastical history. Yet so it is. Here was the palatial residence of the Cæsars when York was dignified with the designation "Altera Roma;" here Severus gave his dying charge to his two sons, the infamous Caracalla and the unfortunate Geta; here Papinian, the famous Roman lawyer, discharged the high functions of the Prætorian Prefect; here Constantius died and Constantine the Great was invested with imperial purple by the Roman legions; and here every loyal Yorkist believes that he was born, though perverse historians give their verdict in favour of Naissus in Dacia.* About the year 1252 this classic site was appropriated to the college of the Vicars Choral† belonging to the Cathedral, who continued to reside there, under strict regulations, until the period of the Reformation. No woman was

* What can be said in favour of the claims of York the curious reader will find in "Drake's Eboracum," or which is more readily accessible in the abridged "History and Antiquities of York" published in 1785 in three volumes. See Vol. I, p. 33 to 43.

† Hargrove's History of York, Vol. II, p. 146.

admitted within the sacred precincts of the Bedern; it was consecrated to praise and prayer. To this circumstance it owes its name which is derived from the Saxon "bed" prayer, and "ern" a place. But "tempora et mores mutantur;" at the beginning of the present century this once splendid seat of imperial grandeur—this abode of priestly sanctity had become the home of poverty and vice. Its condition has however been much improved by the alterations which have been recently made.

Passing from Goodramgate through a covered way formed by the overhanging apartment of a house, the visitor finds himself in what was formerly a spacious court encircled by stately buildings. On the right, at the very entrance, stands an ancient Gothic chapel, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, which within living memory was remarkable for its rich windows of painted glass, now deposited in one of the vestries of the Cathedral. Around, may still be seen a few relics of past magnificence; but the street is chiefly occupied with the neat school premises of the parish of St. Maurice, and a huge unattractive building designated a "model lodging house."

At the bottom of this street, one hundred and forty years ago, when it was yet an enclosed court and retained some pretensions to respectability, lived Thomas Stodhart, the grandfather of the Methodist musical composer of that name, whose lively notes are still heard in some of our sanctuaries. In his house the little society, formed on the occasion of Mr. Wesley's last visit, began its weekly meetings. Thomas Slaton, of Acomb, was the first leader and continued to meet the class for about a year, when he resigned his charge to Mr. Stodhart. Here too, when a preacher could be secured, the congregation was accus-

tomed to assemble; yet occasional gatherings are known to have taken place elsewhere. Wm. Darney and Alex. Coates preached at Mrs. Pindar's at the bottom of Alderman Siddal's yard in Coney Street*; and other meetings were held at Mr. Allen's, grocer, in Pump Yard.†

Thus in the year 1747 Methodism found a home in the Bedern,—the place "where prayer was wont to be made," but by no means an asylum from its foes. The bitter spirit of persecution manifested at Acomb pursued it to this retired nook in York; and whenever the people assembled they were subjected to ridicule and not unfrequently to violence. "Once in particular while Mr. Wesley was preaching, the mob broke the windows, and the very furniture with stones;" and he himself only escaped by the providential interposition of his friends.‡ Perhaps it was in reference to this that Hannah Harrison, whom we shall have to introduce by and by, said: "In my youth I used to attend the Methodist preaching in a room without glass to the windows, when there were only four members in society." ‖ Among the most virulent opponents were some of her own relations. Her aunt, Mrs. Shipton, who kept a ladies' boarding school in the city, cordially hated the Methodists, and on their coming to York vented her spleen by composing a burlesque song, in which they were held up to popular contempt. She however outlived her prejudice, and it is believed died in peace. The son of this lady was more embittered than herself. Shimei-like he stood and cursed the people as they gathered for worship,

* Memoir of R. Spence, p. 129. Mrs. Pindar was the aunt of Wm. Fowler and the first to entertain the Methodist preachers.

† Tyerman's Wesley, Vol. II, p. 120.

‡ Methodist Magazine, Vol. L, p. 457.

‖ Memoir of R. Spence, p. 143.

but his opposition was terminated in an extraordinary manner. One day he ventured into the preaching room to hear what they had to say. After listening for awhile with great attention, he was suddenly smitten to the ground, and being a corpulent man he made the place tremble with his fall. As soon as he was able he got upon his hands and feet and crawled out. "From that hour," says Mr. Pawson, "he was certainly possessed by the devil, and made a spectacle to all who had the curiosity and courage to go and see him."* In this lamentable condition he continued for a considerable time, until at length those, whom he had so often cursed and despitefully entreated, agreed to fast and pray on his behalf. Two days were spent in earnest intercession, when God graciously heard and answered; and not only restored him to his right mind, but gave him repentance unto life. He now sought admission into the society; and though often afflicted in body, continued a member to the close of life.

The following anecdote rests on the authority of a clergyman who was present on the occasion.† In one of his early visits to York, Mr. Wesley was interrupted, while preaching in the Bedern, by a person who entered the room abruptly, and proposed to him several impertinent questions. As Mr. Wesley took no notice of him, and quietly proceeded with his discourse, the man became impatient and raising his voice demanded, "I say, Sir, what is God?" Still Mr. Wesley calmly went on, until seizing a fitting opportunity, he turned to the intruder with a sweet serenity of countenance, and replied, "God is love." This answer was sufficient, and the manner in which it was given

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXV, p. 319.

† Memoir of R. Spence p. 139.

effectually precluded all further interruption. The Christian temper exhibited by Mr. Wesley deeply impressed his audience, for they felt the force of the words of Solomon, "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

Notwithstanding the hatred of the "high," and the violence of the "low," the little flock of four members maintained their steadfastness, and in 1748 had increased to twelve. At the first lovefeast held by Mr. Wesley in Mr. Stodhart's house thirteen were present. Of the original members a few honourable names are still remembered with a justifiable pride; the rest are recorded in heaven. Among them are, Wm. Fowler, the first methodist invested with the shrievalty of the city, Ebenezer Harrison, one of the earliest circuit stewards, Roger Preston, Mrs. Pindar, Hannah Harrison, and Ruth Hall. The two last were well educated young ladies of the middle class, whose history is inseparably interwoven with the early struggles of Methodism in York and its vicinity. Both were gifted with a strong understanding, a holy courage, a singular decision of purpose, and best of all with the unspeakable blessing of a full salvation. To their zeal, determination, and consistency, the successful establishment of Methodism in this locality is greatly indebted; and it is but just to give them a niche in its gallery of worthies, especially as they stood high in the estimation of our venerable founder.

Hannah Harrison* was the daughter of Mr. Harrison just mentioned, who had a large brewery in Skeldergate. Her parents were both members of the Presbyterian Church†; but, on the death of her mother, she was left to

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXV, p. 318.

† The Presbyterians worshipped in St. Saviourgate, in the building now known as the Unitarian Chapel. Lady Hewley who "devoted by a

the care of persons, who took great pains to fit her for this life but troubled themselves little about the life to come. When thirteen years of age, she was seized with severe pains in her head, which resulted in the total loss of sight. Her father, who loved her tenderly, spared no expense to obtain relief. Many doctors were consulted but in vain, and after two years she was pronounced incurable. "Had what I then felt," she said, "been eternal it would have been a hell indeed! I endeavoured to pray but could not; and would have thanked anyone to have told me what I must do to be saved." The year following she heard Sam. Larwood* at Acomb, also Thos. Mitchell, but though pleased she derived no spiritual advantage from their ministrations. At length in Nov. 1750 she was convinced of sin through the instrumentality of Jon. Maskew, and induced to join the class in the Bedern. Her father, though at first strongly opposed to Methodism, soon after followed her example.

Miss Harrison's further experience we give in her own words: "In May 1751 my dear father invited the preachers to his house, and in less than three days I was enabled to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with a living faith. I then hoped the design of Providence in my affliction was fully answered; and repeatedly prayed for the restoration of my sight. But what was my distress, when I was made sensible that my sight was taken away to draw me out of common

deed of trust, the whole of what was originally her own property, to charitable and pious uses," worshipped here and no doubt contributed largely to its erection. There is yet remaining opposite the pulpit, not only the seat which she occupied, but a great chair that was appropriated to her use in her declining years. The chapel was erected in 1692.

* Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. I, p. 246.

life, and to prepare me for a sphere of greater usefulness! The rebellion of my will exceeded description. The Searcher of hearts knows, that though styled the leader of two bands and two classes, it was six years before I could say without a drawback: 'Thy will be done.' About this time brother John Haime visited us and preached several awakening sermons, proving the necessity of (entire) sanctification. Sister R. Hall was deeply convinced of the need of what was then called a further work of grace, which she received in a few months. Brother John Manners professed to have the same experience. But such was my opposition to this doctrine, that I walked seven miles one frosty morning to convince Mr. Manners that he was in a delusion. For ever be adored that wisdom which enabled him to convince me that without the same experience I could neither be comfortable here, nor meet for that degree of glory which then appeared my purchased privilege. From this time I began to seek for full sanctification; and while receiving the Lord's supper I felt the application of those words 'Thou art sealed unto the day of redemption.' The Thursday morning following, when at private prayer, I was so overwhelmed with the Divine presence, that I cried out, 'Lord, can what I feel proceed from any but Thee?' and the language of my heart was,

——'I yield, I yield,
I can hold out no more,
I sink, by dying love compelled,
And own Thee conqueror.'

My next enquiry was, 'Lord, how shall I glorify Thee, who hast done so much for me?' and was answered, 'By keeping silence.' But I asked, 'must I hide this light under a bushel?' and it was again suggested, 'your light will shine most if you keep silence.' I knew obedience

was better than sacrifice, and upon that principle, concealed what I had received for more than five months. I then felt a desire to meet in select band, and was introduced by one of the preachers, but was sharply interrogated and told by one (who is now, I doubt not, worshipping before the throne) that all I said appeared false. The consequence was, none of the good people were permitted to receive my testimony, till Mr. Wesley came to York, who entirely removed their objections." . . . "In my 26th year, when at private prayer, the language of my soul was, 'What wouldest thou have me to do?' The Lord was pleased to show me a path which abounded with sufferings, and terminated in my not having where to lay my head. From that time I had to endure the contradiction of sinners."

These forecastings of a soul in intimate fellowship with God were singularly fulfilled in the treatment she received from one in whose breast her helpless blindness should have awakened feelings of pity; as also in the complicated forms of disease with which God saw fit to afflict her in after life.

A maternal relative proposed to provide for her as his own child, on condition that she would leave the Methodists and abide at his house, until he died; but, as she steadfastly declined the golden bait, he bequeathed his property to another, leaving her the modest sum of fifty pounds. This sacrifice of advantage to principle she never regretted; although the death of her father not long after reduced her to a condition of poverty. When Wesley, who had a high estimate of her piety, heard of it, he replied; "Before Hannah Harrison will want food the stones will turn into bread."* Relief came in a manner she little

* Memoir of R. Spence, p. 142.

expected. Having occasion to go to London for medical advice, Mr. Wesley introduced her to some pious ladies, who belonged to the royal household; they represented her case to the princesses, who became deeply interested in her, and often contributed to her need. That other ladies of rank imitated their example is not surprising; but it is worth mention, that good old George the Third, who, whatever might be his foibles, was certainly a lover of good people, was not ignorant of Hannah's character; and, as she used to relate, once sent her a message desiring her to get the praying people of her acquaintance to intercede for the prosperity of the nation.

So long as she had strength and ability she was very active in her endeavours to promote the work of God and the salvation of men; often walking many miles into the country round about to meet classes and bands; and earnestly exhorting all, with whom she had any intercourse, to be diligent in every good word and work. But it pleased the Lord, during the last fifteen years of her life, to visit her with severe personal affliction; some estimate of which may be formed from the following extract from a letter which was addressed to the Rev. Mr. Gill, a dissenting minister: "I this moment labour under the effects of a dislocated finger, a fractured arm, a violent dropsy and asthma, a gangrened leg, and rheumatic gout, all which complaints are increased by the cold weather. But the Lord liveth and blessed be my Rock. I have not yet forgotten the promise I made you, when crossing Ellaker field. You were then put upon my list of preachers for whom I pray; the circle of which, blessed be God, is greatly enlarged." Secluded from public life she gave herself to prayer and intercession on behalf of her friends,

and many found the benefit of her fervent and effectual supplications. As her piety, education, and vigorous understanding fitted her to give advice in matters of importance, she was often applied to by those who needed it, and her words were accompanied with a secret power that demonstrated the presence of God. Her death corresponded with her life. A little before her decease, she said to Sister Pearson, who was frequently with her, "I have had such views of glory that I cannot unfold; and I wished that you had been with me at the time that I was favoured with them, that I might have communicated them more fully to you." Her last words were: "My Jesus has done all things well." Mr. Gill, the minister before referred to, in a letter to a friend bore this testimony to her worth, "I sincerely loved her on account of her great zeal for God, her singular experience of the power of the Gospel, and her holy walk and conversation."

Ruth Hall* joined the infant society shortly after Hannah Harrison. She had been awakened by hearing one of the homilies read in the parish church of Doncaster; and came to York by the advice of her friends, to seek relief from her painful impressions by mingling in the frivolities of the city. Finding no satisfaction in the pleasures of the world, she one day asked a neighbour "what those people called Methodists were?" and after a little persuasion was induced to hear for herself. The second time she went to the meeting room, Wm. Shent was the preacher. "When I looked at him" she says, "I was unusually affected. I thought, I wish that man would speak to me, I could tell him all that is in my heart. Soon after he did speak to me, and I told him how I had been,

* Arminian Magazine, Vol. IV, p. 477.

and how I was. He said: 'Young woman, you have been stifling conviction. You have been resisting the Spirit of God. If you die as you are now you will certainly go to hell.' I said, 'Oh Sir, do not say so, for I cannot bear it.' He added, 'but I have one word of comfort for you. God will not suffer you to die as you are. Continue to seek Him in good earnest and you will surely find Him.' This was made a wonderful blessing to me, and shortly after I joined the society." She obtained a sense of God's pardoning love a few months later, and did not rest until she received the assurance of His sanctifying grace. On this point she long bore a clear and distinct testimony, which was supported by a holy and blameless life. Several letters describing her own experience, and illustrating the Methodist doctrine of entire sanctification, which she addressed to Mr. Wesley, may be found in the fourth volume of the Arminian Magazine.

Her last words put the seal upon the testimony of her holy life. To a friend who sat up with her she said: "Dying is hard work," then looking up she added: "I thank Thee, O Christ, that I am called to be a partaker of Thy sufferings, and that I am now tasting of Thy bitter cup. O the mighty reward, which my Saviour will bestow on such a worm as me! I shall soon be with Him to triumph in His great salvation." At another time she said: "There is a crown of glory prepared for me, which I am sure of as if I had it already!" To another, who came to see her she said: "I have well nigh run my race, and with a single eye to the glory of God, and have done it with as little noise in the world as I possibly could, and now I have no doubt of arriving safe in the kingdom of my heavenly Father." Then added: "Now loose me and

let me go." And in five or six minutes, the Lord answered her prayer by taking her to Himself to behold His face in righteousness and to triumph in His salvation for ever and ever! Hallelujah! *

These two eminently holy women together with Martha Thompson, already mentioned, Mrs. Crosby of Leeds † and Miss Horrell did much to spread Methodism in the surrounding villages in times when preachers were few, and "the word of the Lord was precious." That in so doing they did not exceed the bounds of propriety may be inferred from the success which attended their efforts; not a few persons were converted and some became ministers of the gospel.

Sat., Apr. 25th, 1751. Mr. Wesley came to Pocklington, then in the York circuit, where, he says, "a gentleman offered a large commodious barn. Thither I went without delay, and began preaching to a few, who increased continually. I have known no such time since we left London. Their tears fell as rain. None opposed or mocked: so that these made full amends for the behaviour of those at Hull.

Yet some of our company had dreadful forebodings of what was to be at York. A worthy Justice of the peace (doubtless to quiet the mob there) had just caused to be cried about the streets, stuck up in public places, and even thrown into many houses, part of the 'Comparison between the Papists and the Methodists.' Perhaps this might be the occasion of some bitter curses, which were given us almost as soon as we entered the gates. But the vain words of those Rabshakehs returned into their own bosoms. I began preaching at six. The *Chapel* was filled with

* Arminian Magazine, Vol. XII, p. 303.

† Memoir in Magazine, Vol. XXIX.

hearers, and with the presence of God. The opposers opened not their mouths. The mourners blessed God for the consolation.

Sun. 26th. At seven God was with us as before, and His word brake the rocks in pieces. We left York about nine, as quietly as we came, and rode to Acomb." *Journal, Vol. II., p.* 248.

The chapel to which Mr. Wesley transferred his congregation during this visit, partly for convenience and partly for the sake of peace, is situated in a court in College Street, in the neighbourhood of the Bedern. It belonged to the Countess of Huntingdon, who selected the site in 1749, when on a visit to York in company with Messrs. Whitefield, Madan, Venn, Capt. Scott, and others.* Whitefield addressed a large audience under the open sky and "even York could not withstand the fascination of his field-preaching; the Methodists (who had acquired experience in such matters) *thinned* out the preacher and overawed the mob."† For fifty years this chapel was supplied with students from her ladyship's college at Trevecca. The last minister was Mr. Whydown, for whom the congregation built a more commodious place in Jubbergate, and then formed itself into an Independent church.‡ The Countess's chapel is still in existence, with the front unaltered except by time, but an opening has been made on one side and the building converted into a stable.

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, Vol. 1, p. 267.

† Ibid, p. 308. ‡ Ibid, p. 311.



COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON'S CHAPEL, COLLEGE STREET.

CHAPTER VI.

1753—1758.

The "Hole in the Wall" and Pump Yard.

The progress of Methodism in York was at first exceedingly slow; a second society-class had probably been formed in Pump Yard,* but the preaching except when conducted in the open air was held in a private house, for at least four or five years. The reason is not far to seek; it had many powerful opponents both among the clergy and the people, who, if they did not actually join in the violence of the mob, did nothing to restrain it, but rather encouraged it by their open aversion. At length in 1752 it was found necessary to secure enlarged accommodation and the preaching was accordingly removed from the Bedern to "The Hole in the Wall," in immediate proximity to the Minster.

The structure that went by this singular appellation formed part of the ancient chapel of St. Sepulchre which communicated with the Cathedral by a small door leading into the north aisle of the nave.† It was built by Archbishop Roger about 1160 and dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the holy angels. After the confiscation of its rich endowments it fell into decay and a portion of it was converted into a public house, which the original occupant designated "The Hole in the Wall." In 1816,‡ when the house was taken down because of its ruinous condition,

* Tyerman's Wesley, Vol. II, p. 120. † Drake's Eboracum.
‡ Hargrove's History of York, Vol. II, p. 120.

the workmen discovered a dungeon, which successive occupiers had used as a cellar, but it bore all the marks of medieval cruelty. The walls were nearly five feet in thickness; its sole entrance was by two massive oaken doors placed six inches apart; against the wall, in which were the remains of iron staples, was a strong oaken frame with a large number of holes for the feet of the captives; three sloping cavities served in lieu of windows, and most ominous of all, behold, a "hole in the wall!" which had every appearance of being designed for the purpose of immuring some unhappy victim of superstition or crime. This discovery created considerable sensation at the time, but further investigation dissipated all unpleasant suspicions respecting the hole, although the place and its furniture were startling enough for an archbishop's prison. One mystery however was solved, viz, how a century before the waggish publican had hit upon his odd designation.

The apartment hired in this public locality seems to have been used only for a few months until some better accommodation could be provided, yet the fact itself is interesting as it indicates that the storm of persecution was beginning gradually to subside, else the despised Methodists would hardly have thought of pitching their tent under the very walls of the venerable edifice where ecclesiasticism sat enthroned. The contrast is almost satirical, but the fact remains as an exponent of the state of things then existing. Lawrence Sterne,* the author of Tristram Shandy, discourses within the Cathedral walls and John Haime or Jonathan Maskew is exhorting sinners to repent without.

* It is just to add, when he appeared in the pulpit many of the congregation rose from their seats and went away. Quarterly Review. No. 188. 1854.

The following satire upon the Methodists, written by an unknown hand, has at least the merit of establishing one or two important facts. Besides indicating the preachers then visiting York, it informs us that Mr. John Johnson, better known as Drummer Johnson, was at that time stationed here with his regiment, and became one of the leading spirits in the infant society.

"Good people repair to Lord Irving's Square
Which lies in the bounds of St. Peter's;
From the 'Hole in the Wall' you've an absolute call,
To hear the new Methodist preachers.
Come leave your vocations, never mind your relations,
Let children go beg or cease eating;
Dont mind your affairs, come abandon your cares,
Come, come to the Methodist meeting.
Of preachers they've store, I think I know four,—
All men of profound sense and learning;
Our orthodox priests, who mere rhetoric teach
Can't compete with their skill in discerning.
A stonecutter* leads, a barber† succeeds,
The third is a clergyman's servant,‡
The fourth beats the drum,‖ and his call is come, come,
And he makes better pay than his serjeant.
But oh! well-a-day! the drum's run away,
And left his poor flock to lament him;
With a tan a tan tan, this excellent man
Is marched where his Majesty sent him.
O! how could our king do such a vile thing
And rob us of such a fine teacher?
The head of our tribe, there's no one beside
Can equal this notable preacher.
Without ordination they assume the high station
And boast of the errand they're sent on,
But the Pope and the devil have signed their commission,
And surely will pay them their pension."§

* J. Nelson. † Wm. Shent. ‡ J. Maskew. ‖ Drummer Johnson.

§ From the MS. of Joseph Agar, Esq. It is not improbable these lines were the production of Mrs. Shipton referred to on page 62. Mr. Agar obtained them from the Rev. John Pawson, who is responsible for the statement there given.

Various causes were conspiring to bring about a change in public opinion. The Wesleys were beginning to be better understood and appreciated; Whitefield, as we have seen, had already "fascinated" a York audience with his sanctified oratory; two persons of influence, at the least, Dr. Cockburn and the Rev. Mr. Williamson, had imbibed something of the Methodist spirit; and more cogent reasons were behind. Two trials had recently occurred in which it was made evident that the persecuted Methodists had law on their side, and that justice would be impartially administered. One took place at Leeds. A riotous mob assailed the house where Jonathan Maskew was preaching, breaking the doors and windows and endangering the lives of those who were assembled. Some of the offenders were indicted for assault, but the ringleader of the mob preferred countercharges against the constable, Jacob Hawley, who was a Methodist; and procured persons to swear that he struck him. The grand jury threw out the indictment against the rioters and found that against the constable. So the case came into court, and justice had well nigh miscarried; for the foreman and one or two jurymen were avowed enemies of the Methodists; but after being locked up for twenty-four hours without food and light the jury agreed upon an honest verdict. Had the result been unfavourable, hundreds were waiting outside with the intention of pulling down the house altogether. When the trial was concluded, Sir Henry Ibison, one of the justices, called a brother and said: "You see God never forsakes a righteous man. Take care you never forsake Him.*"

The second trial occurred in York. Here the magistrates

* Charles Wesley's Journal, Vol. II, p. 92.



PUMP YARD.

of Sheffield were sued for damages because they had permitted the populace to destroy the Methodist preaching-house. The issue was that they were ordered to rebuild it, which was accordingly done.* "Surely," says Wesley, "the magistrate has been the minister of God to us for good." We have referred to the "York Courant" under date, in the hope of finding some particulars of a trial so important in its bearing upon liberty of thought and religious toleration; but were disappointed. We found however what we cannot forbear quoting as another illustration of the spirit of the times. Henry Bosworth was convicted of stealing 2½d. from the church of St. Michael-le-Belfrey, and £3 15s. from the church of St. Saviour, for which he was sentenced to death.

Wesley's comment on the Sheffield trial was verified; for the effect produced by these salutary lessons of law was manifest in the improved behaviour of the people on the occasion of his next visit to the city. In the meantime the preaching was removed to a larger room situated in Newgate, at the entrance of Pump Yard. This formed the upper story of a building which, like its predecessors, retained an ecclesiastical flavour, for it had formerly belonged to the Vicars Choral. The lower part which still remains, bears evidence of its great antiquity, whilst its solid masonry and its one small mullioned window, barred with iron, confirms the tradition that it was once used as a prison. A few years ago the room formerly occupied by the Methodists was destroyed by fire, but the injury done to the building has since been repaired.

* Charles Wesley's Journal, Vol. I, p. 309.

* John Wesley's Journal, Vol. II, p. 245.

From the MS. notes of Jacob Rowell* we learn that in 1753 York formed part of the Yorkshire and Haworth Round; which included the whole of Yorkshire, the north of Lincolnshire and a portion of Lancashire. The preachers itinerating through this wide district were Jon. Maskew, John Whitford, Enoch Williams, Joseph Jones, William Shent and John Edwards. The Rev. William Grimshaw, incumbent of Haworth, had a sort of general control over the whole, but whether he ever preached in Pump Yard, though highly probable, is matter of uncertainty. The new place of meeting was undoubtedly an improvement upon the old, but it is easy to infer from the remarks of Mr. Wesley, on his next visitation, that it was by no means adequate to the increasing needs of the congregation.

"*Wed.*, May 9th, 1753. I rode on to York. We had a rough salute, as I went to preach, from a company of poor creatures in the way. But they were tolerably quiet during the preaching. The greatest inconvenience arose from the number of people; by reason of which the room (though unusually high) felt as hot as an oven.

Frid. 11th. I rode over to Rufforth, preached at one to an earnest congregation. A young man, remarkably serious and well behaved, and rejoicing in his first love, who set out but a few minutes before me, was thrown by his horse, and (as it is termed) broke his neck. Just at the instant, a person going by, who understood the case, took hold of him and pulled it into its place. O mystery of Providence! Why did not this man die, when he was full of humble holy love? Why did he live to 'turn from the holy commandment,' which was then written upon his heart?

* 8vo. Minutes, new edition, Vol. I, p. 716.

Sat. 12th. I observed a *remarkable change* in the behaviour of almost all I met. The very rabble were grown civil, scarce anyone now speaking a rude or angry word.

Sun. 13th. I began preaching at seven and God applied it to the hearts of the hearers. Tears and groans were on every side, among high and low. God, as it were, bowed the heavens and came down. The flame of love went before Him; the rocks were broken in pieces, and the mountains flowed down at His presence.

I had designed to set out for Lincolnshire this morning. But finding that a day of God's power was come, I sent one thither in my place: and after preaching (as I had appointed) at Stamford Bridge and at Pocklington, returned to York in the evening. Let us work together with Him when and where and as He pleases. Every night, while I stayed, many of the rich and honourable crowded in among us. And is not God able even of these stones to raise up children to Abraham?

Sat. 19th. I preached at Pocklington again and rode on to Whitgift-ferry." *Journal, Vol. II, p.* 276.

During this visit Wesley was accompanied by Thomas Mitchell who informs us that Wesley preached to a large congregation on the Saturday. The text on Sunday morning was, 'Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' He says: "I never saw a congregation so affected; most of the people were in tears, some for joy and some from a sense of their sins. He had designed to go on to Lincolnshire. But through the importunity of the people, he consented to stay a little time at York and desired me to go in his place."*

* Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. I, p. 252.

A few weeks later, about the beginning of July, Whitefield appeared on the scene and gave an impetus to the blessed work, he says: "At York I preached four times; twice we were disturbed, and twice we had sweet seasons."*

Towards the close of the year Mr. Wesley, who had hitherto enjoyed uninterrupted health notwithstanding his herculean labours and constant exposure, was seized with a severe illness, which it was feared would terminate fatally. His brother Charles was away at the time, and as the information had not reached him, did not arrive in London until the crisis was past. His first interview with his brother was most touching. He says: "I fell on his neck and wept. All present were alike affected. Last Wednesday he changed for the better, while the people were praying for him at the Foundry. He has rested well ever since: his cough is abated and his strength increased. Yet it is probable he will not recover, being far gone in a galloping consumption, just as my elder brother was at his age."† Fully anticipating his own demise, Mr. Wesley had written an epitaph on the Tuesday before, which he desired to be placed on his tombstone, but God mercifully gave him back to the prayers of his people, to finish the work He had given him to do. This sickness so far enfeebled his constitution as to render it imperative for him to limit his labours in some degree during the following year. They were still sufficiently arduous for any ordinary man, but being chiefly confined to the south of England, we find no further reference to York in his Journal until June 1755.

The room in Pump Yard, which Mr. Wesley repeatedly

* Tyerman's Whitefield, Vol. II, p. 311.

† Chas. Wesley's Journal, Vol. II, p. 96.

designates "the oven," was capable of accommodating about one hundred and twenty persons; it had however this advantage over the places previously occupied, that it was duly registered for public worship; for "in July, 1754, Wm. Horsman, Eliz. Gray, Nich. Baldock, Mary Bayocke, Ebenezer Harrison, Ann Falkner, Wm. Shipton, and John Thorpe, certified to the Court of Quarter Sessions that they intended to make use of a house of John Elwick, Jun. and others, situate in Newgate, as a place of public worship of Almighty God for Protestant dissenters."* The applicants, who without doubt were all members of the society, were constrained to adopt this course for the peaceable enjoyment of their religious privileges, and not without reason, "for within a few months afterwards Sam. Stow, a mariner, and Sam. Penrose, a wheelwright, were held to bail for purposely and contemptuously disturbing the congregation assembled at a meeting-house in Newgate."*

In June, 1755, after visiting the scene of the singular phenomenon which had occurred a few months before at Whiston-cliffs and which he describes at length, Mr. Wesley directed his course to York. Here in Pump Yard, "The people had been waiting for some time. So I began preaching without delay and felt no want of strength, though the room was like an oven through the multitude of people.

Frid. 6th. I read Dr. Sharp's elaborate tracts on the 'Rubrics and Canons.' He justly observes with regard to all these; 1. That our Governors have power to dispense with our observance of them. 2. That a tacit dispensation is of the same force with an explicit dispensation. 3. That

* Davies' Walks through the City of York, p. 35.

their continued connivance at what they cannot but know is a tacit dispensation. I think this is true; but if it be, he has himself answered his own charge against the Methodists (so called). For suppose the canons did forbid field-preaching, as expressly as playing at cards and frequenting taverns, yet we have the very same plea for the former, as any clergyman has for the latter. All our Governors, the King, the Archbishop, and Bishops, connive at the one as well as the other.

Sat. 7th. One of the Residentiaries sent for Mr. Williamson, who had invited me to preach in his church, and told him: 'Sir, I abhor persecution; but if you let Mr. Wesley preach, it will be the worse for you.' He desired it nevertheless, but I declined. Perhaps there is a providence in this also. God will not suffer my little remaining strength to be spent on those who will not hear me but in an honourable way.

Sun. 8th. We were at the Minster in the morning and at our parish-church in the afternoon. The same gentleman preached at both; but though I saw him at the church, I did not know I had ever seen him before. In the morning he was all life and motion; in the afternoon he was as quiet as a post. At five in the evening the rain constrained me to preach in the oven again. The patience of the congregation surprised me. They seemed not to feel the extreme heat, nor to be offended at the close application of those words: 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.'

Mon. 9th. I took my leave of the richest society, number for number, which we have in England. I hope this place will not prove (as Cork has for some time done) the 'Capua of our Preachers.'" *Journal, Vol. II, p.* 317.

We infer from Mr. Wesley's last remark that although the congregations had increased, the society in York was still numerically small, for it is certain that at this period the income from the classes and collections was comparatively insignificant.

In September, Whitefield again followed in Wesley's steps, when "a smart gentleman was touched."* The next year under date August 14th, 1756, he writes from Sunderland to Mr. Joseph Cownley† "At York, Yarm, and here, Jesus hath done wonders, and surely it is a wonder of wonders that such a worthless wretch as I am should be employed by Him. Help, O help me to praise Redeeming love. O, for a hundred thousand lives to spend in the service of Christ."

Charles Wesley's visit to York a month later is specially interesting as it sheds light upon the state of the society and its relations to the Established Church. Passing through Hunslet the clergyman Mr. Crook, called after him, and told him that Dr. Cockburn, an old schoolfellow, had been waiting a week to conduct him to York. With these two congenial spirits "both in their first love; both full of life and zeal and simplicity," he spent a delightful hour and then proceeded to Leeds. The following Tuesday, September 28th, he set out with the Doctor and Wm. Shent for York. "The rain brought back poor William's ague. I preached from Hab. iii. 2, 'O Lord revive Thy work.' The crowd made our room excessively hot; but that did not hinder their attention.

Sep. 29th. Our preacher stationed here had quite left off preaching in the morning. Many told me I could not

* Tyerman's Whitefield, Vol. II, p. 352.

† Lives of Early Preachers, Vol. II, p. 18.

get a congregation at five; but I found it otherwise. The room was almost full while I explained, 'Being made free from sin and become the servants of God ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.' I insisted largely on freedom from sin, as the lowest mark of faith and the necessity of labouring after holiness. The hearers appeared much stirred up. I spent the day in conferring with all comers. The Doctor's house was open to all and his heart also; his whole desire being to spread the Gospel.

Sep. 30th. My subject was John v. 14. I warned them against that sweet doctrine, 'once in grace always in grace,' but not in a controversial way; pointed out some of the infinite ways, whereby they might forfeit their pardon. I exhorted them to go to church, that they might be found of Jesus in the temple; and above all, to pray always, that that word might be written on their hearts, 'Go and sin no more.'

The day was well spent in making up a difference which the sower of tares had occasioned among the principal members of society. Between six and seven I got the society together, with many out of the country; and for two hours showed them how they ought to walk. They gladly received instruction.

Oct. 1st. I preached again to the awakened, and perceived the word take effect. I breakfasted with T. Brook, who has once more left the brethren. I went with him to the Minster which he constantly frequents. I met at his house, Miss T. earnestly seeking salvation. The means of awakening her was 'Theron and Aspasio.' I heard that the young woman who cried out last night under convictions, was the same hour delivered into the glorious liberty of God's children.

I passed an hour at Mr. D.'s and answered his candid objections. I had an opportunity of vindicating my old friend, Benjamin Ingham. It is hard a man should be hanged for his looks—for the *appearance* of Moravianism. Their spirit and practices he has as utterly renounced as we have; their manner and phase cannot be so soon shaken off. I found out Mercy Bell, and had sweet fellowship with her. I marvel not that the Friends (so fallen from their first simplicity) cannot receive her testimony.

We had a most triumphant watchnight. I began between seven and eight. The enemy did not like our employment and stirred up his servants without to interrupt us; but our voices prevailed. We sang the 'Hymns in a Tumult' with great calmness and consolation. Mr. Williamson's maid was deeply wounded. The shout of a King was in the midst of us; and the people thought it full early to part at eleven.

Oct. 2nd. The whole day was spent in singing, conference, and prayer. I attended the choir service. The people there were marvellously civil, and obliged me with the anthem I desired, Hab. iii.; 'a feast for a King' as Queen Anne called it. Mr. Williamson walked with me to his house in the face of the sun. I would have spared him, but he was quite above fear. A pious sensible Dissenter clave to us all day and accompanied us to the preaching. I discoursed on my favourite subject: 'I will bring the third part through the fire.' We glorified God *in* the fire and rejoiced in hope of coming forth as gold.

Sun., Oct. 3rd. From five till near eight I talked closely with each of the society; then, on Mr. Williamson's request, preached on the ordinances from Is. lxiv. 5, 'In those is continuance and we shall be saved.' I dwelt long

on what had been most neglected—family prayer, public prayer, and the sacrament. The Lord set to His seal and confirmed the word with a double blessing. I dismissed them at nine. Our preachers had often kept them till near ten and thereby hindered their going to church.

I received the sacrament at the Minster. It was a solemn passover. They were forced to consecrate twice, the congregation being doubled and trebled through my exhortations and example. Glory be to God alone! I found great faith to pray for him who consecrated; and heard afterwards that it was Mr. B.; one who had known the Methodists from their rise at Oxford and was no enemy to them. I expect, (if I hold out myself) to meet that soul in paradise.

I went to Mr. Williamson's church. He read prayers as one that felt them and then beckoned me. According to our private agreement, I stepped up into the pulpit when no one expected it, and cried to a full audience, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, and believe the Gospel.' They were all attention. The word did not return void, but accomplished that for which it was sent. 'Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth.'

Dr. Cockburn carried me in his chair to Acomb. I lost my voice in the rain, and could not without much straining cry, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' A clergyman and the gentry of the place were present. The rain dispersed us in half-an-hour. I attempted to meet the society at York but could not speak to be heard. We got thereby a longer evening at the hospitable Doctor's. Mr. W. and his family, &c., were helpers of our joy.

Oct. 4th. I took my leave in the words of the Apostle, 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, &c.' From hence I strongly pressed the obedience of faith. We parted in body only.

Through God's blessing on my week's stay among them I hope, 1. Peace and love are restored: 2. They will recover their rising at five: 3. They are brought back again to the church, and sacrament, and family prayer."*

From York Charles Wesley wrote to his "dear Sally," "You have fast hold of many hearts in this place: and the Lord hath in this city much people. I return to Leeds, Birstal, Haworth, &c., the next week; but I *must* see the people here once more; for the Lord hath prepared them for Himself. What say you to promoting a very good work by spending the winter here among us? Your head-quarters are in Dr. Cockburn's most convenient house. Him and his wife I can safely commend to you; they are people after our own heart. Write me your answer by the first post; and W. Shent shall fly to fetch you. I myself would come to meet you more than half way, even to Evesham if need be. Coals are very cheap, we keep excellent fires. Come in the name of the Lord, as a helpmeet for me. Ask counsel of Him. Talk and pray with Lady H. My love to all. Jesus be your guide and portion, Farewell." †

The spirit of love and peace that breathes through these extracts is almost infectious; and we can well conceive that Charles Wesley left behind him in York an influence for good which was felt beyond the limits of the Methodist Society. The true disciples of Jesus of every name acknowledged the attractive force of his gentle nature,

* Charles Wesley's Journal, Vol. II, p. 118. † Ibid, p. 197.

rendered more beautiful by the power of divine grace. Much prejudice was removed and the way prepared for the more decisive movement in advance, which took place the following year. The proposal to winter in York fell through; probably in consequence of domestic circumstances; indeed this seems to have been his last visit to York, as in 1757 he ceased to itinerate through the country at large, and divided his labours chiefly between London and Bristol.

From 1755 to 1757 inclusive, Leeds was the recognised head of the Round; Lincolnshire and Haworth being now separated from it. The preachers at this time itinerating in this locality were John Fenwick, Thomas Lee, Thomas Johnson, Wm. Shent, Peter Jaco, and Thomas Seccombe. The last, a young man of considerable promise, was disinherited by his father because he entered the itinerancy; but the promise was signally fulfilled "when thy father and mother forsake thee the Lord will take thee up." On leaving York he was appointed to Ireland, where he laboured but a few months when he was seized with consumption. Lord and Lady R—— kindly received him into their own house and nursed and treated him as a child. When he had been there a week he requested his lordship to permit the poor members of the Society to visit him, that he might give them some seasonable advice and his dying benediction. To this his Lordship readily assented, on condition that he might be present at the interview. The members came, he addressed them for about half-an-hour and prayed with them in a very affecting manner. After taking leave of them, he turned to Lord and Lady R. with a heart filled with gratitude, thanked them for their kindness, and earnestly prayed that God would bless

them and their posterity. He then drew his feet up into the bed upon which he was sitting, and lying calmly down fell asleep in Jesus. It is said that Lord R. sent the account of his death to a nobleman in London, and concluded with saying, "Now, my Lord, find me, if you can, a man that will die like a Methodist.* "

Thos. Johnson while on the York circuit was impressed for a soldier, but soon set at liberty.† The demon of persecution was not yet dead but dying. The society was gathering strength and influence. With increasing numbers it had gained something in outward respectability, and secured a few influential friends. Everything indicated progress; only the preaching-place was too small. So when Mr. Wesley arrived in York:

"*Mon.*, July 11th, 1757, the difficulty was, how to preach there, in a room which in winter used to be as hot as an oven. I cut the knot, by preaching in Blake Square, where (the mob not being aware of us) I began and ended my discourse to a numerous congregation, without the least disturbance.

Tues. 12th. I set a subscription on foot for building a more commodious room. In the evening I preached at Acomb to a calm, solid congregation. The next evening I preached at Poppleton, where the poor gladly received the Gospel; the rich heard it, and even seemed to approve. God give them to understand and practice it!

Thur. 14th. I resolved to preach in the Square once more, knowing that God has the hearts of all men in His hands. One egg was thrown, and some bits of dirt, but this did not hinder a large congregation from taking earnest

* Atmore's Memorial.

† Methodist Magazine. Vol. XXI, p. 322.

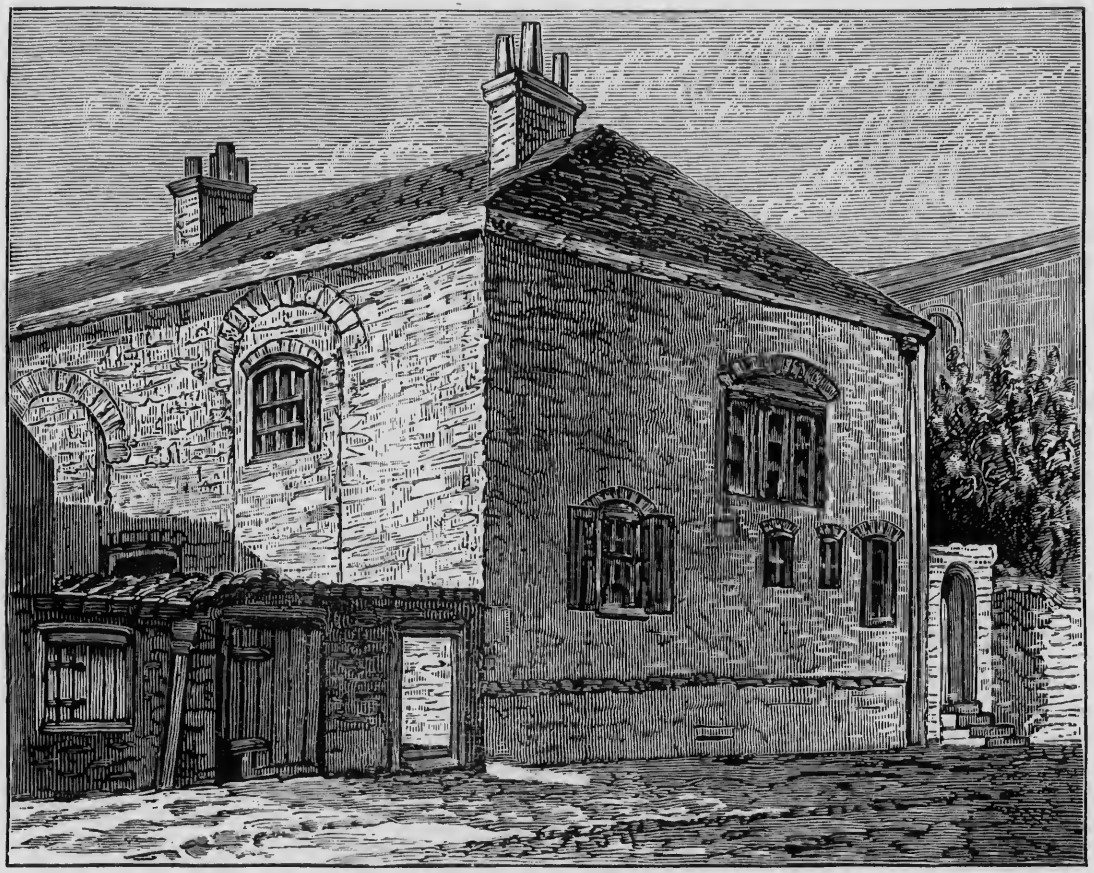
heed to what was spoken of Christ 'the power of God and the wisdom of God.'

Frid. 15th. At three in the morning there were all the probable signs of a violently hot day; but about four God sent a cooling rain. It ceased about seven. But the clouds continued and shaded us to Pocklington. Yet it was too hot to bear the house. So I stood in the main street, and cried, 'If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.' A large mob soon gathered on the other side. And for fear they should not make noise enough, the good churchwarden hired men to ring the bells. But it was lost labour; for still the bulk of the congregation heard, till I quietly finished my discourse." *Journal, Vol. II, p.* 396.

Good Dr. Cockburn was one of the first to contribute to the erection of the new building and generously gave £100.* The scheme however appears to have made but very slow progress, for it was two years before the chapel was opened for public worship. The delay was probably occasioned by the difficulty in securing a site, which, as shown by the draft of the original deed was only conveyed to the Trustees on the sixth day of March, 1759. This accounts for Mr. Wesley's silence on the subject when he visited York. The simple entry is, "On *Mon.*, March 13th, 1758, we came safe to York in the afternoon. After settling the little affairs on Wednesday 15th, I rode to Leeds."

In this year York was made the head of a circuit which included the whole of the West Riding, the Ainsty and portions of the North and East Ridings. The preacher appointed, as we learn from the MS. of the Rev. John Jones were, Thomas Mitchell, T. Tobias and W. Allwood.

* Society Book.



PEASHOLME GREEN CHAPEL.

CHAPTER VII.

Peaseholme Green, 1759—1770.

The first object on Peaseholme Green that would attract the attention of a stranger is an ancient building at the corner of Aldwark, known as St. Anthony's Hall, and now used as the Blue Coat School. It was built in the fifteenth century by half a dozen wealthy citizens, and included a chapel, an hospital, and a spacious hall for the use of "The Fraternity or Guild of Saint Martin of York:" so reads the charter of incorporation, but the original founders had a predilection for St. Anthony and changed the designation accordingly. The site was granted by Sir John Langton, Kt. (grandson of John de Langton, Lord Mayor of York, a century earlier), with the proviso that one chaplain should perform Divine offices daily in the chapel, and that seven poor men should assist in offering up constant prayers therein for the good estate of the king, &c.*

Hard by St. Anthony's Hall, and almost facing the end of it, may yet be seen the remains of the first Methodist Meeting House erected in York. Its plain and unpretending front is little altered, only the large upper window that lighted the gallery, has been superseded by folding doors for the purpose of a hayloft, while the basement has been converted into four tenements which are accessible by passages at the sides. At the back of the chapel, but fronting St. Saviour's Place, was built the first preacher's house. The site on which these premises stand consisted

* Davies' History of St. Anthony's Hospital, p. 6.

of a dwelling-house and garden or orchard, and contained about eight hundred square yards. It was purchased February 27th, 1759 by John Heworth, a carpenter, from the feoffees in trust for the parish of "All Saints," on a lease of ninety-nine years at nine pounds per annum. A week later it was conveyed to the following trustees whose names are worthy of record:—Ebenezer Harrison, brewer; William Allwood, gent.; and Thomas Burnett, butcher, all of York; William Horseman, gent.; and Thomas Prince, husbandman, of Water Poppleton; Matthew Coward, husbandman, of Rufforth; and Thomas Slaton, husbandman, of Acomb. By the terms of the deed, the appointment of the preachers was vested successively in John Wesley, Charles Wesley and William Grimshaw; and on their decease, in the trustees. The doctrines to be preached are those contained in "A Plain Account of the People called Methodists and certain Sermons by John Wesley." In 1775 or thereabouts in consequence of the death of several of the trustees, a new trust was formed consisting of Michael Clarkson, John Barker, Thomas Sherwood, John Wilkinson, George Watterson, Robert Burnett, Thomas Dilcock, William Hawxwell and John Hall.

The site on Peaseholme Green, as stated before, was not secured until nearly two years after the subscription was started by John Wesley; but the York Methodists certainly lost no time in making use of it, for six weeks after they had obtained possession, Mr. Wesley preached in the shell of the new building. He reached York on April 18th, and held a service the same evening in Pump Yard. The following day he says, "I visited two prisoners in the Castle, which is, I suppose, the most commodious prison

in Europe. Both of them seemed to be much convinced and not far from the kingdom of God. At six I preached in the shell of the new house to a numerous and serious audience."

It was probably opened three months later when Mr. Wesley spent a week in York and the neighbourhood; he then writes :—

"*Tues*,, July 10th. From Scarborough I rode to York, where I thought to rest a few days, being almost worn-out; but it was judged quite necessary that I should go to Hull lest the little flock should be discouraged: so on Friday 13th I set out early and reached Pocklington between eight and nine. The last time I was here they rung the bells in order to drown my voice. But he who then paid the ringers is run away; so I had a quiet and serious audience. I had a far finer congregation at Hull: so for once the rich have the gospel preached!

At night Charles Delamotte called upon me and seemed to be the same loving simple man still. I should not repent my journey to Hull, were it only for this short interview.

Sat. 14th. I preached at eight in Mr. Hilton's yard, near the great street in Beverley; and was surprised to see so quiet and civil a congregation, where we expected nothing less. All the men were uncovered, and the whole audience was attentive from beginning to end; nor did one person give us a rude word while we rode from one end of the town to the other. This with a large congregation at York in the evening made me forget all my labour.

Sun. 15th. I began reading to the society an account of the late work of God at Everton; but I could not get through. At first there were only silent tears on every

side; but it was not long before several were unable to refrain from weeping aloud; and quickly a stout young man dropped down, and roared as in the agonies of death. I did not attempt to read any further, but began wrestling with God in prayer. We continued herein till near nine o'clock. What a day of Jubilee was this!

Tues. 17th. I left York and about noon preached at Tadcaster. Distant thunder did not lessen the number, but increased the seriousness of the congregation, who appeared entirely different from those I saw here two years ago." *Journal, Vol. II, p.* 470.

The erection of a suitable place of worship capable of accommodating from four to five hundred hearers, by God's blessing, gave an impetus to the cause of Methodism throughout the circuit. At this time the Round embraced Yarm, Scarborough, Hull and all the intervening circuits.* Alex. Mather, a man "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," was the preacher stationed in the city, and the little churches in the villages round about that met in the house or the barn enjoyed a comparative rest. Under such favorable circumstances it is not surprising that the year 1759-60 was one of great success. Not only were the congregations enlarged, but the number of members increased, and the piety of many was deepened. "In York, at and near Pocklington; in Hull and in various other places many were made partakers of the sanctifying grace of God."* Also "the work was commenced in Whitby, and there was a great outpouring of the spirit in many places"* round about. In reference to this period Wesley remarks: "In the beginning of 1760 there was a great revival of the work of God in Yorkshire. . . . Here began that glorious

* Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. II, pp. 178, 189.

work of sanctification, which had been nearly at a stand for twenty years. But from time to time it spread first through various parts of Yorkshire, afterwards in London, then through most parts of England ; next through Dublin, Limerick, and all the south and west of Ireland, and wherever the work of sanctification increased the whole work of God increased in all its branches. Many were convinced of sin, many justified, many backsliders healed."*

In York the calm intelligent testimony of such women as Hannah Harrison, Ruth Hall, Bathsheba Hall, and such men as Alexander Mather, John Manners, and others, supported as it was by an irreproachable life, made itself felt beyond the Methodist community and left an impression upon the society which was not lost for many years afterward. If it did not silence all objection, and remove the prejudice entertained against a doctrine generally misrepresented and misunderstood, it demonstrated the power of Divine grace in individual life, and excited in many a hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Thomas Olivers, the author of the hymn commencing : "The God of Abraham praise," succeeded the saintly Mather as the Superintendent of the York Circuit. He was then supposed to be in the last stage of consumption, and as he had about three hundred miles to ride every six weeks, and nearly sixty societies under his charge, few thought he would be able to go once round the circuit But he said, "I am determined to go as far as I can, and when I can go no farther, I will turn back."† Accordingly he commenced the work which was enough to try the constitution of a man in vigorous health. By the time he

* Wesley's Works, Vol. XIII, p. 331.

† Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. II, p. 80.

had got about half way round, his appetite began to improve, his sleep was sounder, and when he had completed his journey he found that he had gained new strength and vigour. From this time his recovery though slow was steady. Yet it was several years before he was restored to perfect health. Thomas Hanson, "a plain, honest, zealous" young man, newly pressed into the work, was his co-labourer in a field already white unto harvest.*

About the close of the year, Mr. George Cussons, who afterwards became an eminently useful class-leader and local preacher, joined the little Methodist Society in Scarborough. It then numbered only thirty-six members and was visited once a fortnight by the preachers from York. Not many months after his conversion he and three others, whilst assembled for the worship of God, were forcibly seized by a press-gang and sent on board the tender; where they were detained all night and the greater part of next day; and if the wind had not been contrary would have been put on board a ship of war, which was lying some distance from the harbour. "This providential delay" says Mr. C. "gave time to my friends to interfere, and on the afternoon of the second day we obtained our liberty. I do not attribute the conduct of the men who pressed us to any ill-will they had to us;—no, persons in a higher situation were shewing their hatred to us and endeavouring to banish us from the place; and they so far succeeded in their design, that, during the winter, our meeting together for worship was in a great measure prevented."† Mr. C. subsequently removed to London where he and Mr. John Davies, another Methodist,

* Ibid, Vol. VI, p. 206. † Memoir, pp. 6, 20.

were the "*first movers*" in the formation of the Naval and Military Bible Society in 1780.*

Wesley's next visit to the York Round occurred in 1761. The entry in his Journal is characteristic and may be interesting to lawyers:

"*Sat.* June 27th. At seven I preached at Beverley; about one in Pocklington; and at York in the evening to the far genteelest audience I have had since I left Edinburgh.

Mon. 20th. I met the classes, and found many therein who were much alive to God: but many others were utterly dead; which sufficiently accounts for the Society's not increasing.

Wed. July 1st. The Stewards met from the societies in the country. In the evening we all wrestled with God for the revival of His work. Many found their hearts much enlarged therein, and had confidence He would answer the prayer.

Thur. 2nd. I set out for North Cave, twenty computed miles from York. I preached there at nine to a deeply serious congregation, and was much refreshed. At two I preached to another such congregation at Thorpe, and concluded the day by preaching, and meeting the Society at Pocklington.

Frid. 3rd. We returned to York, where I was desired to call upon a poor prisoner in the castle. I had formerly occasion to take notice of a hideous monster, called a 'Chancery Bill;' I now saw the fellow to it, called a 'Declaration.' The plain fact was this: some time since, a man who lived near Yarm assisted others in running some brandy. His share was worth near four pounds. After he had wholly left off that bad work and was following

* Memoir of Mr. George Cussons, p. 71.

his own business, that of a weaver, he was arrested and sent to York gaol, and not long after, comes down a Declaration: 'That Jac. W. had landed a vessel laded with brandy and Geneva, at the port of London, and sold them there, whereby he was indebted to his Majesty £577 and upwards.' And to tell this worthy story, the lawyer takes up thirteen or fourteen sheets of treble stamped paper. O England; England! will this reproach never be rolled away from thee! Is there anything like this to be found either among Papists, Turks, or Heathens? In the name of truth, justice, mercy and common sense I ask, 1. Why do men lie for lying sake? Is it only to keep their hands in? What need else of saying it was the port of London, when everyone knew the brandy was landed above three hundred miles from thence? What a monstrous contempt of truth does this shew, or rather hatred to it! 2. Where is the justice of swelling four pounds into five hundred and seventy-seven? 3. Where is the common sense of taking up fourteen sheets to tell a story that may be told in ten lines? Where is the mercy of thus grinding the face of the poor? thus sucking in the blood of a poor beggared prisoner? Would not this be execrable villany if the paper and writing together were only sixpence a sheet, when they have stripped him already of his little all, and not left him fourteen groats in the world?

Sun. 5th. Believing one hindrance of the work of God in York was the neglect of field-preaching, I preached this morning at eight in an open place near the city walls. Abundance of people ran together most of whom were deeply attentive. One or two only were angry, and threw a few stones; but it was labour lost for none regarded them.

Mon. 6th. I rode to Tadcaster and preached within, the rain not suffering us to be abroad as I intended." *Journal, Vol. III, p.* 62.

In 1762, Mr. John Pawson commenced his itinerancy on the York Round;* his colleagues were Peter Jaco, John and Nicholas Manners, Richard Henderson, and James Cotty. The increased number of the preachers on the ground shows that the work had been greatly extended by the opening of new places. It now took eight weeks to go the round of the circuit, and the Lord prospered His word on every hand. Pawson says "the people treated me with the tenderest affection and the Lord condescended to crown my feeble labours with a blessing. I did not labour in vain, or spend my strength for nought. Yet I had many trials; for in several places we were greatly disturbed with mobs, especially at Beverley."* In January, 1763, John Manners writes to Mr. Wesley, "Since I was able, when I could be spared from the round, I have laboured a good deal in fresh places; and in spring I shall think it my duty to do it more, especially since there is such a universal call as I never knew before. The language of most places is 'Come over and help us.' After much opposition I joined nineteen together in Society in Malton, and fifteen in Pickering. . . . They have added during the last three or four months upwards of eighty members to the Societies, and a proportionate number have been justified by faith. . . . God has been pleased to take lately to himself six or seven persons of our little number; Wm. Shipton, Dinah Holmes, and Richard Richmond, of York."†

* Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. IV, pp. 24, 25.

† Arminian Magazine, Vol. V, p. 104.

During the year Mr. Henderson was taken ill, his place was supplied by John Atlay, of Sheriff Hutton, whose conversion took place two or three years before, and was the means of introducing Methodism into his native village. His attention was first drawn to divine things by hearing Hannah Harrison at Strensall. A month later he heard John Manners at York, and was deeply convinced of sin. He says, "I could not sleep all night and in the morning invited him to come and preach in my father's house. When I came home on Sunday, I told my father. He was exceedingly angry and protested he should never preach there. I pleaded much but in vain. When he went to church, I shut myself in, and earnestly prayed that God would change his heart. He came from church and said: 'I have never been so uneasy at church in all my life, I could not keep those words out of my mind:—If thou rejectest this offer of salvation perhaps thou wilt never have another—he shall come whatever be the consequence.' I took knowledge that God heareth prayer. He came on Tuesday, and preached to a large and quiet congregation; and that night my father and two sisters were convinced of sin. For near three weeks I could scarce sleep or eat but just enough to keep life together. On April 1st, having spent most of the night in prayer, I felt those words applied to my soul with inexpressible power: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee.' I then saw as I had never done before the whole mystery of our redemption, and could not possibly doubt but that I was reconciled to God through the Son of His love."* He soon began to preach, and having successfully filled the place of Mr. Henderson, the following year he was appointed to the York circuit in

* Arminian Magazine, Vol. I, p. 578.

the room of Thomas Newell, who was removed by death.

In June, 1763, Mr. Wesley spent a few days in York, but has left no particulars of his visit. His next entry is:

"*Wed.*, April 11th, 1764. Between eight and nine I began preaching at Beverley, in a room which is newly taken. It was filled from end to end and that with serious hearers. Perhaps even these may know the day of their visitation. About one I began at Pocklington. Here likewise all were quiet and listened with deep attention. When I came to York at five in the afternoon, I was fresher than at seven in the morning. During the preaching many were not a little comforted; and one old follower of Christ, more than seventy years of age, was now first enabled to call Him Lord by the Holy Ghost. I found that a most remarkable deadness had overspread this people, insomuch that not one had received remission of sins for several months last past. Then it is high time for us to prophesy on these dry bones, that they may live. At this I more immediately pointed in all my following discourses; and I have reason to believe God spoke in His word; to Him be all the glory!

Thur. 12th. I spent an hour with John Manners, weak in body, but not in spirit. He is fairly worn out in a good service, and calmly waits till his change shall come.

Sun. 15th. In the evening many even of the rich were present, and seriously attentive. But, O! how hardly shall these enter into the kingdom: How hardly escape from 'the desire of other things!'

Mon. 16th. I preached at Tollerton at one. The congregation was large and serious. Some were deeply affected and wept much: many received comfort." *Journal, Vol. III, p.* 158.

John Manners passed away ten days after Mr. Wesley saw him. He was sensible to the last and truly happy in God, saying: "The way is quite clear: my heart is at liberty." He was singularly useful in the revival which began in the city of Dublin in 1760. Mr. Wesley describes him as "a plain man, of middling sense, and not eloquent, but rather rude in speech: one who had never before been remarkably useful, but seemed to be raised up for this single work. And as soon as it was done, he fell into a consumption, languished awhile and died."* He died at his brother-in-law's, Thomas Dilcock, in Peaseholme Green, and was buried in St. Saviour's churchyard.

In 1766 Mr. Wesley was twice on the York Round: he writes:

"*Mon.* April 28th. I preached at Thorne. Although a great part of the congregation had never heard one preach under a tree before, yet they behaved extremely well. Before we came to York I was thoroughly tired, but my strength quickly returned, so that after preaching to a large congregation, and meeting the Society, I was fresher than when I began.

Tues. 29th. I preached at noon at the new house at Thirsk almost equal to that at Yarm." *Journal, Vol. III, p.* 237.

Again: "*Sat.* July 19th. About one I preached at Pocklington (though my strength was much exhausted), and in the evening at York.

Sun. 20th. After preaching at eight I went to St. Saviourgate Church. Towards the close of the prayers the rector sent the sexton to tell me the pulpit was at my service. I preached on the conclusion of the gospel for

* Miles's Chronological History, p. 94.

the day. 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.' I did not see one person laugh or smile though we had an elegant congregation." *Journal, Vol. III, p.* 245.

Perhaps some of them would have been inclined to smile if they had known who the stranger was, for only shortly before, the incumbent, the Rev. Mr. Cordeux, had warned his congregation against "hearing that vagabond Wesley." According to his usual custom, Mr. Wesley entered the church dressed in full canonicals. Observing a strange clergyman in his audience the rector unwittingly invited him to preach. After the service he asked the clerk if he knew who the stranger was: "Sir" said he "it is that vagabond Wesley, against whom you warned us." "Aye indeed," was the reply, "we are trapped this time, but never mind, we have had a good sermon." The Dean heard of the matter, and threatened to lay a complaint before the Archbishop. Mr. Cordeux, afraid of the consequences, took the opportunity, when next in the presence of his Grace to tell him, that "he had allowed Mr. Wesley to preach in his pulpit." "And you did right," said the Prelate. The Dean's complaint was never more heard of, and Mr. Cordeux, so far from repenting of what he had done, some years after made a second offer of his pulpit, when Mr. Wesley preached on the eight beatitudes. An aged disciple who was present said that Mr. Wesley took occasion to remark on the words "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Perhaps no man in England knows more of what this means than I do."*

It was probably during this visit in 1766 that he called

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. L, p. 458.

to see Mrs. Craske who had been recently converted. Soon after the happy change, it pleased God to afflict her with a dangerous fever. In the midst of her affliction Mr. Wesley came to York and was desired to pray with her; this he did, and she recovered from that very hour; a mercy which she remembered with gratitude to the day of her death.* The same year John Murlin, who acquired the name of the weeping prophet, preached one Sunday in Peaseholme Green from Luke xix, 13. "Occupy till I come." Under that sermon a young man, who had lately come to reside in York, was awakened and soon after found peace. Privileged with the society of those holy women Ruth Hall, Mrs. Cross, and others he was encouraged to seek the blessing of entire sanctification, which he obtained and exemplified in a useful and devoted life. That young man was Geo. Clarke, afterwards of Whitby, who, after fifty-eight years of faithful service; forty-six of which he was a local preacher, and forty a class leader, sent from his dying bed the following message to his old friend Robert Spence: "Of late it has been my plan like Enoch, to walk with God and be perfect, and I doubt not but He will by and by receive me to Himself. *That is life enough for me;* Farewell, we shall meet again." Among a number of other bequests, he left £250 to Methodist chapels in Whitby and a valuable library for the use of the preachers.

In the end of June 1768, Mr. Wesley says, he "visited most of the societies in Yorkshire," but gives no details. The York Courant however, which hitherto had hardly noticed his existence, has under date June 28th the following paragraph: "Last Sunday the Rev. John Wesley

* Arminian Magazine, Vol. VI, p. 643.

preached at Acomb, at five o'clock in the morning; in the forenoon at Castlegate Church; in the afternoon at Spurriergate Church; and in the evening at the Methodist Meeting-house, Peaseholme Green; where he administered the sacrament to about five hundred persons." The number of communicants, if not overstated, must have included many persons belonging to other denominations, for the membership in the whole of the York Circuit three years later when Hull and Scarborough were separated from it, did not exceed 558.

Frid. June 22nd, 1770. Mr. Wesley attended the York Quarterly Meeting and appointed Messrs. William Tomlinson and Thomas Robinson, Circuit Stewards. Among other matters of discussion was the division of the Round which was determined by the Conference that met the following August. The entry in the Journal indicates the improved spiritual condition of the Society. "I went on to York, where there is now more life among the people than has been for several years. We found much of the presence of God this evening, and more the next. One young man was in a violent agony, and could not refrain from crying aloud. Several continued with him in prayer till ten o'clock. He was then filled with joy unspeakable.

Sun. 24th. I met the select society at six; I had the pleasure to find that some, who had lost the great blessing for months or years, had recovered it with large increase. At eight I preached to a people ready prepared for the Lord. At nine I met the children. At five, by taking out the benches, we made room for the greatest part of the congregation. Afterwards I spent an hour with the society, and so concluded the busy, happy day. *Mon.* 25th. I preached in Tadcaster at noon." *Journal, Vol. III, p.* 381.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Preacher's Pay, 1747—1773.

The first race of Methodist Preachers were men of strong faith and high purpose. No selfish or mercenary motive impelled them to travel up and down the country, pointing sinful men to Christ as the only way of salvation. They had a solemn conviction that the people were perishing; and as they had obtained mercy, love to Christ constrained them to tell it to others. In so doing they had nothing to gain in this world and much to sacrifice. What persecutions awaited them we have seen in the case of Nelson; what privations they had to endure is not so well known and understood as it ought to be. Besides casting themselves upon the uncertain hospitality of those to whom they first preached, they had in not a few instances to forsake house and home, and wife and children. Christopher Hopper, who began to itinerate in 1749, says: "I left the Dales and the dear children God had given me. I rode to Smeals, where I parted with my dear wife and friends, with melting hearts and many tears. In those days we had no provision made for preachers' wives, no funds, no stewards. He that had a staff might take it, go without, or stay at home."* Peter Jaco, says, "My hardships were great. I had many difficulties to struggle with. In some places the work was to begin; and in most places, being in its infancy, we had hardly the necessaries of life; so that after preaching three or four times a day and

* Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. I, p. 200.

riding thirty or forty miles, I have often been thankful for a little clean straw with a canvas sheet to lie on; very frequently we had also violent oppositions. At Warrington I was struck so violently with a brick on the breast, that the blood gushed out through my nose, mouth and ears. At Grampound I was pressed for a soldier; kept under a strong guard for several days, without meat or drink, but what I was obliged to procure at a large expense; and threatened to have my feet tied under the horse's belly, while I was carried eight miles before the commissioners: and though I was honourably acquitted by them, yet it cost me a pretty large sum of money as well as much trouble. For many years I was exposed to various other difficulties and dangers. But having obtained help from God I continue unto this day! And all thanks to Him, I wish to live and die in His service."*

From these extracts it is clear, that no provision was made at the beginning of Methodism, to supply the wants of the preacher as he went on his round. For lodging, food, and raiment he was dependent upon the kindness and hospitality of those to whom he ministered the word of life. If these failed he was left to shift as best he could for himself. Hence for some years not a few of these devoted men laboured, as occasion required, at their own calling, and could say with the great apostle, "these hands have ministered to my necessities." As societies were formed the leader or society steward, where such an officer had been appointed, took charge of the preacher, and met his expenses, as they rose, out of the class money and lovefeast collection, as far as it would go: for he was under no obligation, except the law of love, to advance money

* Ibid, Vol. I, p. 264.

out of his own pocket. A characteristic story is told of Hannah Harrison, whose father was probably the steward of the York society at the time. The preacher called for money to defray the expense incurred by the accommodation of his horse at the inn. The charge was eighteenpence, but the funds of the society were exhausted, and there was nothing to meet it. In this extremity, she stripped a ribbon from her head, and sold it for nearly the amount. By some other ingenious device the sum was raised to one and tenpence, and after paying the charge for the horse, she presented the preacher with fourpence telling him she "had set him off like a gentleman."*

In York, when the preacher was at home, the practice was, to allow him, no matter who provided, his own wife or others, 4d. each for breakfast and supper, and 6d. for dinner; but no allowance appears in the society book for tea, and whether he had any or not is doubtful. The circuit found him clothes, and paid for his barber and shoemaker; and every little item of expenditure had to pass under the eye of the steward. It may be amusing to find such entries as repairs of breeches, cost of wigs, shaving, &c.; but they were necessary. The preacher had no stipend allowed him and the society steward was appointed to supply his wants. The cost of wigs might seem a superfluous expense, but they were in fashion, and the preacher must be made presentable to his congregation. One good brother's head cost the circuit, during his stay, as much as £3 15s.

As the number of preachers increased and the work extended, this mode of supplying their wants was felt to be exceedingly inconvenient. Those who were popular

* Memoir of R. Spence, p. 143.

had no lack, but others less gifted were often reduced to painful straits. It was therefore decided at the Conference of 1752, that the preachers should receive a stipend of £12 per annum, to cover such contingent expenses; but it was some years before this rule was universally adopted. In 1762 there was no such allowance on the York Round; and in 1765 William Fowler and Roger Preston attended the Conference at Manchester as a deputation to plead against the large sum of £12 a year;* but their objections were overruled, and the usage was established.

When the Quarterly Meeting† was first instituted in York cannot now be ascertained with anything like accuracy; probably it was in 1758 when York became the head of a Round. The functions of this meeting were originally spiritual rather than secular. In 1749 the Conference directed the superintendent preacher; "To hold Quarterly Meetings and therein diligently to enquire both into the spiritual and temporal affairs of each society; to send from every Quarterly Meeting a circumstantial account to London of every remarkable conversion, and of every one who dies in the triumph of faith." But now that a fixed amount was to be paid to the preachers, in lieu of incidental expenses, circuit stewards became necessary; who received the contributions sent by the several societies to the quarter board and paid the quarterage. The Society Stewards however, continued responsible for the board and lodging of the preacher as before, and handed over to the Circuit Stewards either a fixed amount, or the excess of their receipts, when local expenses had been disbursed.

* Miles's Chronological History, pp. 67. 71.

† On the origin of Quarterly Meetings, see an interesting article by Rev. Dr. Stamp in the Methodist Magazine, Vol. LXVI, p. 376.

Still no provision was made for the wives and families of the preachers; "sometimes the stewards attended to their wants, and at other times overlooked them; at all times their supplies were precarious." For this reason many preachers remained unmarried, some left their wives and children in the care of their friends, and in some cases the wives supported themselves. A few valuable men, unable to endure this trial of their faith and patience, settled down as dissenting ministers. At length when Mr. Mather entered the itinerancy, in 1757, the London stewards agreed to allow his wife four shillings a week; this led to an improved state of things, and the better circuits gradually adopted the practice of allowing £2 10s. per quarter for a wife, and 10s. for each child.

We insert in the Appendix two extracts from the York Circuit Stewards' book. The former contains the report presented at the last quarterly meeting held before the separation of Hull and Scarborough from the York Round; and is especially valuable as it shows what places at the time were regularly visited by the preachers. Of these, thirteen are now circuit towns, not to mention a number of others, which were then only occasionally visited or not at all. The second extract, taken ten years later, exhibits the progress made after the division. Here and there in the Steward's book we find the entry of a payment made to Mr. Wesley, no doubt for expenses incurred during his stay; but the amount never exceeded 21s., and twice was only 6s. 10½d. Mr. Whitefield, who visited York twice at the close of the year 1767, received 14s. 9d., and Dr. Coke in 1788 was paid 13s. 6d. As to the preacher's residence, it seems that at first a single room was rented for his accommodation at the annual cost of

30s. per annum, and we may be sure it was most economically furnished. Afterwards a larger dwelling was found contiguous with the chapel; for in 1774, we have an inventory of the furniture belonging to it, and a curious one it is. But in 1780 a house was built by the society at a cost of £305, and then it is we have the first entry made for a carpet; before this the preacher was provided with matting.

These details may appear to some of our readers unnecessary, but they have a moral; they prove what our fathers, some of whom were not only highly gifted, but men of good social position, were willing to endure for Christ's sake; and they show too that the early Methodists, according to their ability, were ready to minister to their preachers' comfort. "But the allowances were so pitifully small!" Were they? Anyone, who asserts this, has not studied the subject; he forgets not only the paucity and comparative poverty of the members, but the altered value of money. Mr. Arthur Young, in his "Six months' tour through the North of England," published in 1770, gives us the average price of provisions at Stillingfleet, seven miles distant from York as follows: Bread per lb. 1d., Butter (not Butterine) 5¼d. Cheese 2d. Meat 3½d. Eggs are not mentioned, but from the York Courant we find them quoted at 12 for 1d.; altogether 12¾d. The same articles to-day on a moderate estimate would cost 4s. 4d. Thus, so far as the necessaries of life are concerned, a little more than a hundred years ago, the man who had £50 in his pocket was as well off as one who to-day has £20: and if clothing was more costly, everybody knows it was more durable; if sugar and tea and some other articles were more expensive, these were luxuries, which

could be dispensed with, but "bread and cheese" are the staff of life. On the other hand the givings of the people were, under the circumstances, very liberal, and if *fairly* contrasted with those of modern times will suffer nothing by comparison. Mr. Tyerman in his life of Wesley has the following note appended to Mr. Wesley's remark in 1761 that he found the members in York "utterly dead" and the "society not increasing:" "An idea of the low state of Methodism at York may be formed from a fact stated in the old Society Book, namely, that the seat rents of the chapel amounted to only £8 per year; that the monthly collections averaged not more than 5s. 8d. each, and the class moneys hardly 6s. 6d. weekly." These particulars are correct except that the weekly class money averaged 6s. 8d. But what is the inference? If by the "low state of Methodism" is simply meant, that the numbers were few, it must be fully admitted; but, if it is intended to imply want of heart in the members, it is misleading; as it is very easy to show. The number of members in the city at this period did not exceed eighty, and as far as we can discover the richest of them were a few well-to-do tradesmen. These eighty members produced on an average 6s. 8d. per week class money; but keeping in mind the altered value of money, which is of quite as much worth to the giver as the receiver, we must multiply this 6s. 8d. by four in order to make a fair comparison with the givings of to-day, and the result will perhaps surprise many. The average as compared with to-day is then £1 6s. 8d. per week for eighty members, or 4s. 4d. per quarter per member. If every circuit could show a like average to-day, few, if any, would be in debt, except through lack of numbers, and circuit stewards might be Jubilant.

Certainly York was not behind its neighours, and anyone that will take the trouble to examine the Minutes of Conference from 1766 onward, where these matters were particularly recorded, will find that the York circuit received *less* from the general fund, and did *more*, in the way of supporting *neglected* wives, than Leeds, Sheffield, and many other places.

In 1769 Messrs Boardman and Pilmore, two warm-hearted Yorkshiremen, bred within the limits of the York Round, were appointed and *fitted out* by the Conference as the first Missionaries to America. Having bid adieu to their friends at Kirby Moorside, they set out for York, and arriving on Saturday evening, were invited to preach on Sunday in Peaseholme Green Chapel, with the promise of a collection for their mission. The amount realised was *ten shillings* which at the time was thought a fair collection. Perhaps it was if all the circumstances were known. Yet small as it appears, and small as it actually was in comparison of the generous doings of the Preachers at the Leeds Conference, it is not to be despised as the first collection in aid of Methodist Foreign Missions, voluntarily offered, and given in pledge of better things to come.

About the close of 1771 a very painful circumstance occurred, which created great excitement in the Society. William Smith, an estimable member at Skelton in Cleveland, was cruelly murdered by one Luke Atkinson, who some time before had been publicly expelled from the Society in consequence of debt. John Nelson, then travelling on the circuit, was subpænaed to appear at the York assizes as evidence against the prisoner and his wife. In a letter to Mr. Charles Wesley* he gives the following account of

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. LXV. p. 301.

his appearance in court, which is supplemented from his Journal. "I was the first person called; and great silence was in the court. The judge asked me if I knew the deceased. I answered, 'Yes.' He said, 'Do you know the prisoners at the bar?' I replied 'Not in person, till this day, my lord.' He said, 'How came you to turn them out of your Society?' I said 'For not keeping the rules of our Society, my lord: when anyone breaks them they are reproved; and if that will not do, we declare that they are no longer of us.' He said, 'What are your rules?' I said, 'First to cease from evil in word and work; from blaspheming the name of God; from evil speaking, as lying, backbiting, or speaking evil of magistrates or ministers; not to buy or sell uncustomed goods; nor to contract debts they cannot pay; nor to make promises and not to keep them. And I understood that these people at the bar had broken these rules and had been reproved again and again to no purpose. Then my Lord, I declared to the whole congregation, that they that looked fine in other birds' feathers, and fared sumptuously at other men's expense were not fit for a religious society; no, they were no better than thieves and robbers; and I bade all beware of such, for they were not of us; and they were crossed out from among us: and we declare to the whole world, that no one is any longer of us than he keeps our rules.' The judge arose and said: 'Good morality, Mr. Nelson;' and then being seated again desired me to read the rest of the rules. After hearing them his lordship said emphatically to the court, 'Gentlemen, this is true Christianity.' Then my lord said to the man and his wife, 'Have you anything to object to what John Nelson hath said?' and they both replied 'Not a word, my lord.' Many more questions

were asked me, that gave me an opportunity to explain the thing to judge and jury, counsel and sheriff, that I could not have done anywhere else; and I doubt not but it will remove prejudice out of the minds of many and be for the furtherance of the Gospel." The class-leader was called and heard with much attention; after other witnesses the man was condemned and afterwards confessed the crime. The *York Courant* of Tuesday, March 19th, 1771 supplies the following additional particulars. "Yesterday Luke Atkinson, who on Friday last was found guilty of the murder of Wm. Smith, miller, of Skelton in Cleveland, was executed at Tyburn and his body sent to the hospital for dissection. On Sunday evening he told Mr. Whatton that he had without the least provocation, for three weeks before the perpetration of the murder, several times a strong inclination to commit it, but had always got the cruel thought driven from his mind till the unhappy night in which he effected it, when he went to bed but could not rest. That he got up and fell to prayer in hope of diverting these thoughts; but so irresistible was the impulse that he at last went to the house of Wm. Smith armed with a mattock and hatchet, broke open the door with the mattock, and found him asleep in bed; when he struck him several times on the head, but whether with the mattock or the hatchet, he did not remember: and that afterward he took the deceased's purse containing one half-guinea, one quarter-guinea, about five shillings in silver and sixpence in copper. He declared that his wife was ignorant of the murder, and died penitently." John Nelson adds "I think we ought to bless God that they were turned out in so public a manner, so long before the crime was committed. The Lord is converting some

sinners among us and several have died in triumph: old Mrs. Romaine for one: O sir, pray for me and beg the prayers of all the church!"

An entry in the Steward's Book about this time is worthy of insertion and shows how our fathers entered upon the secular business of the church. If modern Methodists could so far control the claims of earthly things, the practice might be revived with advantage, and it would not only go far to smooth the course of church business, but also to promote a true revival of the work of God,

"Memorandum January 1st. 1771.

For the future the Quarter Days for York Circuit are to be as follows:—

First Tuesday after March 25th.

First Tuesday after June 24th.

First Tuesday after September 29th.

Day after Christmas Day, December 26th.

Preaching or Watch-nights to be alway on Quarter Day; at seven if Preaching only, and eight if Watch-night.

At 10 o'clock in the morning on every Quarter Day there shall be a sermon preached and directly after preaching the Quarterly business to begin.

A Yearly Lovefeast shall be on every Whitsun-Tuesday at York.

J. Thompson, J. Johnson } Preachers. Wm. Tomlinson, Thos. Robinson } Stewards."

The lovefeast thus initiated was proposed by Drummer Johnson who was a useful local preacher and eminently successful in winning souls. Strongly impressed with the evils attendant on the fair usually held at Whitsuntide, he suggested the idea of holding a lovefeast on the Tuesday afternoon, that at least such young people as professed

godliness might have a counter-attraction. The good drummer was so highly esteemed that the York Society had purchased his freedom from military service, and set him up in business as a draper, but he was still known under the sobriquet of Drummer Johnson. He bore an exemplary character, was an honest tradesman, and a true Christian. Wherever he went he carried his Bible with him; in the street or in the market; on a visit to a friend or on the highway to his appointment, this precious treasure was always to be seen under his arm, ready for use. He died in 1775, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Mary Bishophill the Younger. The funeral was attended by a large concourse of people, whose tears attested their respect for his memory. Mr. Pilmore, then over on a visit from America, headed the procession giving out Dr. Watts' hymn: "Hark from the tombs a doleful sound," &c., and afterwards preached his funeral sermon from Heb. xii. 14.*

The Whit-Tuesday lovefeast soon acquired a widely-extended popularity; persons flocked to it from a great distance and the chapel was generally densely crowded. For many years it was the great annual festival from which few of the members were willing to be absent. Often as many as fifteen hundred persons were present, and many were the glorious testimonies given to the power of the Divine grace; many the blessings received or the conversions which followed. One pleasing instance may be here recorded. Barbara Styan, a young disciple of eleven years attended the lovefeast ten days after her conversion. While Robert Spence was saying: "I can speak my experience in one word: 'My beloved is mine and I am

* Memoir of R. Spence, p. 35.

His,'" she was greatly blessed. She clearly saw the necessity of loving God with an undivided heart, and began importunately to plead the promises. The next evening the Lord graciously heard her prayer and brought her soul into perfect liberty. She lived but a few years and died a faithful witness to the truth. A little before her departure she broke out in a manner that astonished all around. "Hark!" she said, "don't you hear? Hark! they whisper, angels say: sister spirit come away."*

After being continued more than one hundred years the lovefeast was finally given up in 1876.

Mr. Wesley came to York in June, 1772, but has left no account of his visit. At the ensuing conference Thomas Rankin, was appointed to take the superintendency of the missions in America; but as his departure was fixed for the following spring, he was directed in the meantime to supply York. "During the time I spent in this circuit," he says; "I considered deeply and with much prayer the importance of the work which lay before me. It had dwelt upon my mind more or less for some years: and the nearer the period arrived, the greater it appeared to me. The thought of leaving Mr. Wesley as well as my brethren, whose counsel and advice were always at hand and ready on every trying occasion, was no small exercise to my mind. . . . But the consideration of the work of God and the prosperity of Zion, swallowed up every other concern."† It is a singular and interesting fact that the three pioneers of Methodism in America were all more or less connected with York. J. Rogers succeeded Mr. Rankin but broke down under the pressure of the work.‡

* Arminian Magazine, Vol. XVII, p. 74. † Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. V, p. 184. ‡ Ibid, Vol. IV, p. 298.

CHAPTER IX.

Enlargement. 1773—1780.

During the years 1773—1775 York was favoured with the ministrations of William Hunter, whose holy life and earnest advocacy of a higher state of grace contributed much by God's blessing to the increase and edification of the Society. He had himself experienced the sanctifying power of the truth some years before. His account of the change then wrought in his soul is valuable as it is edifying. He says: "I heard Mr. Olivers preach a sermon upon the subject. His text was, 'Let us go on to perfection.' His doctrine was clear and his argument strong. My heart consented to the whole truth, and I had clearer views of the way of attaining it, namely by faith. This added new vigour to my spirit and I seemed to be more on the wing than ever. I prayed and wept at His footstool, that He would show me all His salvation. And He gave me to experience such a measure of His grace as I never knew before; a great measure of heavenly light and divine power spread through all my soul. I found unbelief taken away out of my heart; my soul was filled with faith; my love to Christ was like fire, and I had such views of Him, as my life, my portion, my all, as swallowed me up; and O how I longed to be with Him! A change passed upon all the powers of my soul, and I felt a great increase of holy and heavenly tempers. I may say, with humility, it was as though I was emptied of all evil, and filled with heaven and God.

Thus, under the influence of this power and grace, I rode upon the sky. My soul fed on angels' food, and I truly ate the bread of heaven. I had more glorious discoveries than ever of the Gospel of God our Saviour, and especially in His saving the soul from all sin. I enjoyed such an evidence of this in my own mind, as put me beyond all doubt; and yet I never had such a sense of my own littleness, helplessness and unworthiness as now. So true it is that only grace can humble the soul. From the time the Lord gave me to experience this grace, I became an advocate for the glorious doctrine of Christian perfection: and according to the gift He has been pleased to give me, I bear a testimony of it, wherever I go; and I never find my soul so happy as when I preach most upon the blessed subject."*

Such was the man who at this time occupied the pulpit in Peaseholme Green, and such was his communication, it is not surprising therefore that the congregation so far increased, that it was found necessary to provide additional accommodation. As originally constructed the chapel had a gallery only at the end, the body was filled with plain benches and the place would comfortably seat about four hundred persons. It was determined to add side galleries capable of entertaining one hundred more. This was effected in 1775 at a cost of £78. A curious account of the expenditure and receipts may be found in Mr. Spence's Memoir.† The total amount raised by the Society in York was £43 13s. which it took five years to pay; how the rest was obtained we cannot discover, as the appeal for help to the Conference in 1776 was unsuccessful. The

* Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. II, p. 248.

† Memoir of R. Spence, p. 144.

chief contributors were Roger Preston, William Fowler, William Ramsden, Mr. Shadwell, Miss Scott, John Spence, James Simpson, and Rachel Stephenson, who each gave 21s. Mr. Robert Spence and Mr. Hunter each gave 5s. These names exhibit the financial strength of the Society in 1775 and it is evident that the Methodists in York were as yet but a feeble folk. It is said that they were so poor that they were often obliged to meet for prayer in the dark because they could not afford to buy candles. The conductor of the meeting was thus compelled to call upon persons to pray, hypothetically. "Now Brother so and so, *if you are there*, you must pray."

On the 18th of July 1774 John Nelson died somewhat suddenly in Leeds, after seeing the work which God had commenced through his means, spread throughout Yorkshire. His remains were conveyed to Birstal for interment amidst thousands of spectators, some singing and others weeping. Mrs. Fletcher thus describes his character; "He was an extraordinary man for tenderness of conscience, watchfulness over his words, and especially for self-denial and rigid temperance. He made it a rule to rise out of bed about twelve o'clock and sit up till two, for prayer and converse with God: then he slept till four, at which time he always rose. Many of his friends at Leeds observed him to be more lively both in preaching and conversation a few days before his death than ever." * Nine days before the death of this brave veteran, Wesley was again in York. He says:

"*Sat.*, July 9th. I preached at Pocklington and York.

Sun. 10th. Some of Tadcaster informing me that the minister was willing I should preach in the church, I went

* Ibid, Vol. I, p. 178.

thither in the morning. But his mind was changed, so I preached in the street, to a listening multitude from the lesson for the day, on the righteousness which exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees; in the morning and evening at York.

Tues. 12th, was the Quarterly Meeting. It was a busy and yet a comfortable day. Many were refreshed both at the love-feast, and while I was describing the 'hundred and forty-four thousand,' standing 'with the Lamb on Mount Sion.' Who is ambitious to be of that number?" *Journal, Vol. IV, p.* 21.

A young lady, who heard Mr. Wesley on the Sunday evening, writes in her diary, "His venerable looks inspired one with a veneration for him which I cannot express. Mrs. Hall invited me to breakfast with him. I accepted the invitation and was much pleased to see how this great minister of the Gospel conducted himself among his preachers with cheerfulness, ease, and simplicity." This young lady was the daughter of Mr. Timothy Mortimer of York, and sister of the Rev. Dr. Charles Mortimer who was chosen Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, a little before his death. Frances Mortimer accompanied a friend just married, to London, and there was led to see the necessity of a religious life. On her return to York she withdrew from fashionable society, moderated the style of her dress, and sought by intercourse with godly people to live a Christian life. Among her chief advisers was her own minister, the Rev. Wm. Richardson, who formed a sort of class for religious instruction, which she diligently attended. By and by she sought the advice of Mr. John Spence, and began occasionally to attend his class as also that of Mrs. Bathsheba Hall. While observing all the

ordinances of her own church she availed herself as often as possible of the ministrations of William Hunter and George Story, by which she was greatly profited. But it was only after long and painful inward conflict, protracted through four years, that she entered the rest of faith, shortly before Mr. Wesley's visit. Though strongly attracted to Methodism and actually sharing in all its peculiar privileges—its classes, bands, and love-feasts, she did not formally become a member of Society, in deference to the wishes of an aged mother, but her heart was won, and besides her Methodist acquaintance in York she numbered among her choicest friends such honourable women as Miss. Bosanquet, Miss Ritchie, and Mrs. Crosby, whose singular devotedness provoked her imitation.

Having mentioned the Rev. William Richardson, some notice of this excellent clergyman, who perhaps more than any other helped to shape the religious life of York during the last century, is necessary. In 1771 he was appointed subchanter of York Cathedral, and at the same time presented to the incumbent curacy of St. Michael-le-Belfrey. He entered upon his charge prepared to lend a helping hand to the great work of religious reformation, and therefore in his sermons dwelt principally on the leading truths of the Gospel, "repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." Similarity of sentiment and aim attracted the Methodists to his church by crowds, and after listening to William Hunter or George Story at eight in the morning in Peaseholme Green, they usually flocked at half-past ten to St. Michael-le-Belfrey to hear Mr. Richardson. For these reasons his brethren suspected him of a tendency to Methodism, and the Rev. Mr. Comber sent him a friendly remonstrance on the subject. To this

he returned a manly reply from which we extract a few sentences that clearly indicate his position. "I never had any connexion with the Methodists, either at Kirby-Moorside or York more than with my other parishioners. I think of them, as I do of other Protestants, who differ from myself in opinion, *with charity*. As far as I think their opinions agree with the word of God and the doctrines of the Church of England, I follow them, without regarding common prejudices; at the same time I dislike the manner in which they speak of the influences of the Holy Spirit, and their unscriptural notions of perfection." . . . "As soon as a person begins to show any symptoms of seriousness and strictness, more than the fashion of the age allows, he is called a Methodist, though he may happen to have no sort of connexion with them; and when once this stigma is fixed upon him, he becomes like a deer whom the sportsmen have marked out for the chase: he is driven away by the rest of the herd, and avoided like an infection." . . . "With these sentiments I shall never, I hope, renounce a truly pious friend, because the world chooses to call him a Methodist, nor avoid a duty which the gospel of Christ enjoins for fear of getting the same appellation myself."* Mr. Richardson seems to have credited the Methodists with the unscriptural notion of *sinless* perfection, so often ignorantly imputed to them, but all they desire and teach is contained in the beautiful prayer of the Communion Collect: "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit that we may *perfectly love* Thee and *worthily magnify* Thy holy name." This they not only ask but believe to be possible; and if it be thought impossible, it is mockery to ask it. Making

* Life prefixed to Sermons, Vol. I, p. 18.

all allowance for differences of terminology, there is little doubt that Mr. Richardson's sentiments on this subject were much nearer allied to Methodism than he supposed. After a long period of useful ministerial service to the same congregation, extended to just half a century, during which not the least benefit he conferred upon the city was that of securing the help of other clergymen like-minded with himself, he entered into rest, May 17th, 1821. In his dying moments a cordial was offered him which he declined, remarking, "All your means are of no use, *my pleasures are to come.*" These were his last words.

It was one Easter Sunday, in Belfrey Church, while receiving the Sacrament at the hands of Mr. Richardson, that Robert Spence, who was then coachman in the employ of a gentleman in the neighbourhood of York, received the assurance of God's pardoning love. But his Methodism occasioned the loss of his situation, and as in applying to other gentlemen for a similar engagement, he made it a point of conscience to declare his sentiments, and stipulate for the privilege of attending the meetings, as circumstances would permit, he was everywhere rejected. After a few years of painful vicissitudes he settled in York in 1775, where, by the help of his brother John, already mentioned, and the generous assistance of Mr. John Hall, he commenced as a bookseller in a humble way. His diligence, integrity, and business tact, by the blessing of God, soon secured his advancement, until ultimately he became a partner in the leading printing and publishing establishment in the city; and, as in his prosperity he retained his simple earnest piety, his labours as a leader and local preacher contributed much to the promotion of Methodism. His brother John, who was also a leader and

useful local preacher, soon removed to Hull and entered into partnership with Mr. King in carrying on a wholesale ironmongery business, thus laying the foundation of the extensive concern known as King, Turner and Co. It is said that Mr. King, who was a godly man, received his first religious impressions in Peaseholme Green Chapel under singular circumstances. There happened to be a collection to which he contributed with a liberality, which seems to have astonished the recipients. After the service he remained awhile without the door listening to earnest supplications of those who remained to pray. By and by a good brother began to pray for the young man who had put a sovereign into the box. That prayer was answered in his conversion shortly after.

Another eminently useful man at this time though in humbler circumstances was Thomas Chapel, respecting whom there is little information. But Miss Mortimer has left this testimony of him that he was a pious and holy man; a useful leader and local preacher and of good report. "I never leave his house," she says, "without a savour of good things." Jenny Wilson too, formerly a member of the Society of Friends, was an ornament of Peaseholme Green and a leader. Passing the Chapel one day with her mother Miss Mortimer asked her to go in and see the new gallery. She did so and stayed to hear the sermon. "Surely," says Miss M., "nothing less than a divine power could have prevailed on my mother to do a thing which she had long believed God had forbid her to do. I never had the smallest hope of seeing her in a Methodist chapel."

Tues. July 2nd, 1776. Mr. Wesley writes: "I went to York. The house was full enough in the evening while I

pointed the true and false way of expounding those words, 'Ye are saved through faith.'

Wed. 3rd. I preached about noon at Tadcaster with an uncommon degree of freedom, which was attended with a remarkable blessing. A glorious work is dawning here against which nothing can prevail, unless the ball of contention be thrown in among plain people by one or two that have lately embraced new opinions. In the evening I preached at York on the fashionable religion, vulgarly called morality; and showed at large from the accounts given of it by its ablest patrons, that it is neither better nor worse than atheism.

Thur. 4th. I met the Select Society, and was a little surprised to find, that instead of growing in grace, scarce two of them retained the grace they had two years ago. All of them seemed to be sincere; and yet a faintness of spirit ran through them all. In the evening I showed to a still more crowded audience the nature and necessity of Christian love, ἀγάπη, vilely rendered charity, to confound the poor English readers. The word was sharper than a two-edged sword, as many of the hearers felt. God grant that the wound may not be healed till He Himself binds it up.

Frid. 5th. I preached at Foggathorpe, a lone house, a few miles from Howden." *Journal, Vol. IV, p.* 75.

Again we find Miss Mortimer in company with Mr. Wesley and other Methodist notabilities and catch a few echoes of the conversation with which they hallowed the social board. She says: "For the last week I have enjoyed many high and singular privileges in hearing Mr. Wesley, and in enjoying the conversation of many religious friends, who are come to meet him in York. They seem

fully to answer our Lord's character of His disciples: 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' Miss Ritchie's conversation and manner were so truly Christian, that while I was in her company, and for some time afterward, I seemed to feel as though I had hardly any religion, or had attained any experience. . . . In conversation, Mr. Wesley remarked, 'If we see the blessing we seek at a distance, it will always remain so, unless we make continual efforts to attain it. When we feel our faith weak and low, we resemble the man with the withered hand, and then is the time to stretch it forth, for the Lord is always present to heal. It is wrong to expect the power before we believe, we should believe in order to receive the power, just as the little child keeps making efforts to walk, till he can walk. Love, joy and peace, are the fruits not the foundation of this faith.'

Mr. Cornelius Cayley observed: 'When we are most tempted, that was often the time when the Lord was about to give us a blessing. The Lord often grants us blessings in a way which we think the most likely to counteract them. In outward providences, we often walk in darkness and have no light; but by trusting in the Lord He often exceeds our expectations. Instead of wasting our time in reasonings, and in groundless scruples, we should direct all our efforts to believe, and look to the Cross of Christ to be healed of every wound. While we are seeking after holiness, the evidences of our justification will become clearer and clearer; for the desire of holiness is a present blessing. Our constant prayer should be 'Lord enable me, this day to embrace Thy will.'"*

After tea Miss Mortimer accompanied Miss Ritchie to

* Memoirs of Mrs. Pawson, p. 50.

Mrs. Hall's class and was struck with the simplicity and grace with which she conducted it. "The image of God, formed in her soul seemed to shine forth in her prayer and address. She excelled in pressing the members to look for higher degrees of grace; every one who was awakened she encouraged to look for justification; and every one who was justified she exhorted to look for a clear evidence of sanctifying grace." "If," says Miss Mortimer, "Mr. Richardson, with whom she has had frequent conversations, would invite her to meet his people, she would be a great blessing both to him and to the souls of his people." Her intercourse with Miss Ritchie strengthened her desire to join the Methodists, and she accordingly informed her mother that she had serious thoughts of doing so, but met with such decided opposition, that she deemed it best to continue in the same independent position, still using every opportunity of participating in their public and private means of grace. She however formed the resolution to wrestle with God for sanctifying grace and in this was greatly aided by the counsels of her Methodist friends, and by occasional attendance at the select band held at Thomas Chapel's. This consisted of a number of persons who professed to enjoy the abiding witness of the Spirit of God and were seeking purity of heart. It should be observed that at this time all the classes and band-meetings were held in private houses, as there was no suitable accommodation at Peaseholme Green. Perhaps this was an advantage, the loss of which may be regretted, as it helped to bring religion more directly in contact with common and social life. The early Christians broke bread from house to house and did eat

their meat with gladness and singleness of heart praising God.

Whether the saintly Fletcher ever visited York is uncertain, but the following letter written to Messrs. Hare, Terry, Fox and Good, at Hull; and to Messrs. Preston, Simpson and Ramsden, at York, shows that he was invited and wished to come.

London, Nov. 12th, 1776.

"My dear Brethren,

I thank you for your kind letters and invitations to visit you, and the brethren about you, should the Lord raise me to any degree of my former strength. I have often found an attraction to my companions in tribulation in Yorkshire: my desire was indeed a little selfish, I wanted to improve by the conversation of my unknown brethren. If God bids me be strong again out of weakness, I shall be glad to try if He will be pleased to comfort us by the mutual faith of both you and me. My desire is that Christ may be glorified both in my life and death. I am glad you wish that the power of godliness may flourish among the professors of the faith. If I have any desire to live at any time, God is my witness, that it is principally to be a witness in word and deed, of the dispensation of *power from on high;* and to point out that Kingdom which does not consist in word, but in power, even in *righteousness, peace and joy by the Holy Ghost* the *Spirit of power.* I am writing an essay on that important part of the Christian doctrine, and hope that it will be a mite in the treasury of truth which the Lord has opened for the use of His people.

Should I be spared to visit you, the keep of a horse, and the poor rider, will be all the burden that I should lay on you; and that will be more than my heavenly Master

indulged Himself in. I am just setting out for Norwich with Mr. Wesley, whose renewed strength, and immense labours astonish me. What a pattern for preachers! His redeeming the time is, if I mistake not, matchless.

Should I never have the pleasure of thanking you in person, for your brotherly regard, I beg you will all endeavour to meet me in the Kingdom of our Father, where distance of time and place is lost in the fulness of Him that is *all in all.* The way ye know,—the penitential way of heart-felt faith working by obedient love. In that good, though narrow way, I trust you will help by your prayers and example. My dear Brethren, your affectionate Brother and willing Servant in Christ,

JOHN FLETCHER."*

Mr. Wesley paid a passing visit to York in 1777 on Wednesday, May 14th. "At eleven I preached at Pocklington, with an eye to the death of that lovely woman, Mrs. Cross. A gay young gentleman, with a young lady stepped in, stayed five minutes and went out again, with as easy an unconcern as if they had been listening to a ballad singer. I mentioned to the congregation the deep folly and ignorance implied in such behaviour. These pretty fools never thought that for this very opportunity they are to give account before men and angels! In the evening I preached at York. I would gladly have rested the next day, feeling my breast much out of order. But notice having been given of my preaching at Tadcaster, I set out at nine in the morning. About ten the chaise broke down. I borrowed a horse but he was none of the easiest, in riding three miles I was so thoroughly electrified that the pain in my breast was quite cured. I preached

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXIV, p. 43.

in the evening at York; on Friday took the diligence and on Saturday afternoon came to London." *Journal, Vol. IV, p.* 93.

Among other leading Methodists attending Peaseholme Green Chapel we find in Miss Mortimer's diary the names of Mr. Hilton, Mr. and Mrs. Buckle, Miss Horrell and Dr. Hosmer; the last being a medical gentleman who had for a few years itinerated as a Methodist preacher, but was now resident in York in a state of infirm health. Mrs. Bathsheba Hall died, March 2nd, 1779, in the full triumph of faith. Miss M. says, "I did not know of her death; but about nine o'clock I found an outpouring of the spirit of prayer for the whole family; and it occurred to me that she was probably dead, as it afterwards proved. The funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Thomas Hanson from the words, 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father,' but O what solemnity; what tears! what power attended the word! I never heard such a funeral sermon before."

Miss Mortimer had not yet joined the Society but the hindrances in her way were being gradually removed. Having heard a sermon by Mr. Richardson on the fear of man she took the opportunity, on her return home, of opening her whole heart to her mother and plainly told her that after going among the Methodists for eight years, keeping close all that time to Mr. R. and his meetings, she had long seen it to be her duty to cast in her lot with the poor despised Methodists, but had forborne lest she should grieve her in her old age. Her mother was less violent than she expected, but still decidedly averse to such a course. Matters were precipitated by Mr. Wesley's visit

in May; as this visit is not noticed in his Journal we quote from Miss Mortimer.

May 5th. "Mr. Wesley is now here; and has delivered three excellent sermons. In illustrating our Saviour's words, 'The blade, the ear, and the full corn,' he associated them with St. John's three states of grace, distinguished by children, young men, and fathers. In explaining Heb. xii. 1. he warned the people against what are called little things, such as a positive temper, which affects to be always right; and its opposite a weak and pliable temper; rudeness, sternness, and the needless indulgences of snuff and tobacco. In his first sermon on 1 Cor. xiv. 20., he showed what reason could do in religion, and what it could not do: how far it could carry Socrates, Adrian the emperor, &c.; and how far their hope fell short of the Christian's hope; for reason is unable to produce the faith, the hope, and love, of a Christian.

This forenoon, Mr. Wesley met the select band: he permitted me to meet, without asking me to join the Society. On my return, I felt great liberty in praying for him, and felt my heart overflow with abundance of love to him and his people. But what shall I do? My mother is more hostile to my joining than ever.

May 8th. Yesterday Mrs. Buckle called to say that Mr. Wesley in calling over the names of the select band, had (someone inadvertently answering for me), put down my name, but as it was only in the band, and as I was not joined in any class, it was quite optional, she said, whether I would let it stand. I felt thankful that the Lord had so far made my way, and without my own will. I therefore sat down this morning and wrote to Mr. R. to inform him of my intention to join the Methodists as soon as oppor-

tunity offered; that as they already looked upon me as one of the Society, from my long attendance upon the select band, I did not see it right to retreat.

After writing this letter, I felt much peace in my own soul, and a spirit of prayer for Mr. R. and his people. And I have the more cause to be thankful that little danger is to be apprehended from my mother. She seems now to leave me to my own choice. How wonderfully has the hand of the Lord appeared in this matter!"*

In June 1780 Miss Mortimer began to meet in private band with Mrs. Wilson, Esther Chapel, Ruth Hall, and Miss Raison, and in December after gaining her mother's consent and spending some time with her in prayer, she went to Mr. Thomas Taylor, who was then superintendent, and formally connected herself with the Methodist Society. Three months later, her mother, who had long been in an infirm state of health, finished her earthly course, leaving a clear testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus.†

Mr. Thomas Taylor, just mentioned, was appointed to York in 1780, and in the account of his life, supplies us with some interesting particulars of the condition of things in the circuit. He says, "My next remove was to the York circuit in which I met with many kind friends. They had just finished a neat genteel house for the preacher's residence, and made everything convenient. A small spot of ground before the front I turned into a neat little garden. I found the people very loving, and the congregations increased, and I and my fellow labourers were received with very great affection. I preached abroad in several parts of the city, being very willing to stir up the inhabitants to seek salvation.

* Memoirs of Mrs. Pawson, p. 60. † Arminian Mag. V. XVI, p. 40.

Preaching one Lord's day, in the Thursday-market, the Lord Mayor sent his officers to forbid me and to insist upon my coming down. I let the speaker deliver his message, and then resumed my discourse, taking no notice of what was said to me, as indeed it meant nothing saying anything to the officers, seeing they only did as they were commanded. I happened to be speaking from a text that was somewhat singular: 'These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.'—Acts xvii, 6. Our brethren thought it highly advisable to publish the sermon, as we expected to hear further from the magistrates. Accordingly I wrote it down while everything was fresh upon my mind; and I have reason to hope it was useful in York, as numbers read it who perhaps never heard one of us preach in their lives; nor did I hear any more from the Lord Mayor.

There is but little trade in any part of the circuit; and where there is little trade, there is seldom much increase in religion. The people are chiefly farmers, and in general in a state of great bondage to their wealthy landlords, to whom they are a kind of vassals, and in general dread them more than they do their Maker. And though some of them have got money upon their farms, with a deal of care and hard labour, yet there are others who are very hard set to live; and certainly they are some of the greatest slaves in England, for they labour hard and live very poorly. In short, they seem to have little comfort here, nor any bright prospect of faring better hereafter. However, there are a few who labour to keep their garments undefiled and who are very loving to such as are sent to preach the gospel among them." *

* Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. V, p. 55.

CHAPTER X.

Wesley's last Visits. 1780—1791.

The preachers stationed on the York Circuit in 1779-80 were Michael Fenwick and John Morgan. The former was a very eccentric character, described as having a "weak head" but a "good heart." One of his foibles was to imitate Mr. Wesley as far as possible in his manner of speaking, praying, preaching, and writing. In the last he succeeded so well, that it was difficult without close scrutiny, to distinguish between the two.* It is said that in earlier life he had a great ambition to be immortalised in Mr. Wesley's Journal; if so, he was more than gratified by the following comical entry which Mr. Wesley makes after preaching at Clayworth. "I think none was unmoved but Michael Fenwick, who fell fast asleep under an adjoining hayrick." The latter was "a plain, rough, honest, pious man, possessed of great and singular talents."† Towards the close of the year 1779, he went to Kingswood for the benefit of his health, and at the earnest solicitation of the York friends, Richard Burdsall, then a local preacher in the Leeds Circuit, engaged to supply his place for one month. This remarkable man, who was afterwards more closely identified with York Methodism, had already laboured seventeen or eighteen years with uncommon zeal and success, and achieved a reputation extending far beyond the bounds of his own

* Atmore's Memorial, p. 123.

† Ibid, p. 286.

Circuit. At the expiration of the month, on Mr. Morgan's return, the friends were unwilling to part with him, and accordingly wrote to Mr. Wesley requesting that he might remain as a third preacher, which he did until the following Conference. But as he was at this time a widower with a family of four children, and an aged mother dependent upon him, after consultation with Mr. Wesley on the occasion of his next visit, he deemed it his duty to return to private life.

Mr. Wesley arrived in York on Monday, June 5th, and writes as follows: "About noon I preached at Tockwith and then went on to York. I was surprised to find a general faintness here; one proof of which was that the morning preaching was given up.

Tues. 6th, was the Quarterly Meeting, the most numerous I ever saw. At two was the love-feast, at which several instances of the mighty power of God were repeated; by which it appears that His work is still increasing in several parts of the Circuit. An arch news-writer published a paragraph to-day, probably designed for wit, concerning the large pension which the famous Wesley received for defending the King. This so increased the congregation in the evening that scores were obliged to go away. And God applied that word to many hearts 'I will not destroy the city for ten's sake.'" *Journal, Vol. IV, p.* 175.

The paragraph to which Mr. Wesley alludes was copied from the *London Courant*, and is in the following terms: "The famous preacher Wesley may now be ranked among the pensioned hirelings of the Court; and has been busily employed in some parts of Yorkshire very lately putting forth his pious political tenets. The established churches in many places have been laid open to him, particularly at

Halifax and Bingley, where in his sermons he has repeatedly exhorted his disciples to purchase a fourpenny book which he calls a true statement or account of the war in America, an extract from the pamphlets and evidence of Mr. Galloway, than which nothing can be more fraught with misrepresentation and falsehood."*

Strange reverse of circumstances! The man, himself unchanged in principles, who had been persecuted for disaffection was now insulted as a court sycophant. So it was with him, and so it has often been with his followers. If we suffer reproach, it is in good company.

It was about this time that Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., visited York and preached in Peaseholme Green Chapel; when an amusing incident occurred which, trivial in itself, acquires an accidental interest from the subsequent career of the party concerned. Mr. B. had no sooner begun to repeat the Lord's prayer than a young man about nineteen years old and stalwart appearance suddenly jumped up and bolted out of the chapel. It was Joseph Agar; a name now widely known in Methodism. He had come to York from under the Hambleton hills as apprentice to Mr. John Lister, currier, and was induced by a fellow-apprentice, who was a member of the Society, to come to the chapel, but being of the "most straitest sect of his religion" he deemed it little less than blasphemy for a Methodist preacher to presume to use the Lord's Prayer, and hence his unceremonious exit. However, he ventured to come again and soon found that true religion was something more than a form of words or an authorised ritual. He became deeply concerned for the salvation of

* *York Courant* June 6th, 1780.

his soul, and joined the Society; yet it was three or four years before he found peace through believing in Jesus.

On the expiration of his apprenticeship, he removed to London, for improvement in his business and there was brought in contact with the Wesleys, Romaine, and other eminent ministers of the word of truth, through whose instructions he derived much benefit. His leader, Mr. John Atlay, at that time Mr. Wesley's book steward, took great interest in him and watched over him with the tenderness of a father. At length light broke in upon his soul and he rejoiced in Christ Jesus, putting no confidence in the flesh.*

In 1781, Mr. Wesley visited York twice, at an interval of a few weeks. "After preaching at many places on the way, on Wednesday, June 27th, I preached at York. Many of our friends met me here, so that in the evening the house would ill contain the congregation; and I know not when I have found such a spirit among them; they seemed to be all hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Thurs. 28th. I preached at eleven in the main street at Selby, to a large and quiet congregation; and in the evening at Thorne. This day I entered my seventy-ninth year and by the grace of God I feel no more of the infirmities of old age, than I did at twenty-nine." *Journal, Vol. IV, p.* 198.

"*Sun.* July 29th. I expected to preach at one as usual under the hill at Birstal; but after the church service was ended, the clerk exclaimed with a loud voice, 'The Rev. Mr. Wesley is to preach here in the afternoon.' So I desired Mr. Pawson to preach at one. The church began at half-past two; and I spoke exceeding plain to such a

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. LXXIII, p. 1122.

congregation as I never met there before. In the evening I preached at Bradford to thousands upon thousands on 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Mon. 30th. I crossed over to Tadcaster at noon; and in the evening to York. Hence I took a little circuit through Malton, Scarborough, Beverley, Hull, Pocklington and came to York again.

Sun. August 5th. At the old church in Leeds we had eighteen clergymen and about eleven hundred communicants. I preached there at three: the church was throughly filled; and I believe most could hear while I explained the 'new covenant' which God has made with the Israel of God." *Journal. Vol. IV, p.* 202.

These extracts are suggestive; the venerable evangelist now verging on four-score, is everywhere received with honour and respect. The churches once closed against him are placed at his service, the clergy formerly his bitterest opponents cluster round his steps. He had steadily pursued his noble purpose of spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land, undeterred by the violence of mobs, the slanders of clerical hatred and the vulgar burlesque of Bishop Lavington, but now he is courted and caressed. What is the meaning of this change? Was it a tribute of respect paid to reverend age, or was it the force of public opinion, or was it an appreciation of his services in the cause of true religion, or was there some deeper motive underlying all this? We cannot tell, but one thing is plain: "When a man's ways please the Lord He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

During the year, Dr. Hosmer, already mentioned, a man well known in early Methodism, finished his earthly

course in the city of York. He was educated for the medical profession, but for several years laboured with great success as an itinerant Methodist preacher. He was a "son of thunder, a man mighty in prayer and in the scriptures, and the honoured instrument of turning many to righteousness," but intimidated by persecution he retired from the work and settled down as a surgeon in Sunderland. From that time he was singularly afflicted both in body and mind. A few years before his death he removed to York, and such a sufferer, says Mr. Thomas Taylor, "I never visited in all my days. Such a complication of disorders I never witnessed in any human being, and his mind was if possible still more wretched. It was almost terrifying to be in the room with him. This son of sorrow Mrs. Taylor visited daily like an angel of peace, and he never wished to be without her. One night when she was about to retire to rest it was impressed upon her mind that she must go and see him. She put on her cloak and desired the servant to get the lantern. The girl endeavoured to dissuade her, saying, it was too late and they would be gone to bed. She said, 'I cannot be easy if I do not go.' Accordingly she went, and knocked at the door, which was opened by Mrs. Hosmer. 'Oh' said she, 'surely God has sent you, I am at my wit's end; the distress of Mr. Hosmer is more than I can bear.' Going upstairs she found him in a most pitiable condition. 'The sorrows of death compassed him and the terrors of hell had taken hold of him.' The sight of Mrs. Taylor gave him a little relief and while she prayed with him the Lord gave peace to his soul, which he held fast until his spirit returned to God."*

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXXV, p. 56.

The chapel erected by the Countess of Huntingdon in College Street, to which reference was made on a former page, continued to be supplied by students from the college at Trevecca until 1779 when, by the appointment of her ladyship, the Rev. W. Wren came from Lincolnshire to fill the place of the student then in charge, who happened to be ill. His services were most acceptable, and such was his zeal that while thus engaged he raised and maintained a congregation at Barrow on Humber, first in a barn, and afterwards in a chapel built for the purpose. When the time for his removal came, his friends at York were anxious for him to remain, and as this did not meet the approbation of the Countess a separation occurred, in consequence of which the chapel was built for him in Grape Lane, chiefly by the exertions and at the cost of Mr. Batty. This, Mr. Wren opened in November, 1781, selecting for his text Gen. xxiv. 58. "Wilt thou go with this man?"* Having now given up the itinerancy and secured a settled home, he thought it expedient to marry, and in the course of a few weeks proposed a similar question to Miss Frances Mortimer, who to use her own words "totally declined his overtures." Nothing daunted, Mr. Wren employed his friend Mr. Parker, who happened to be a barrister, to urge his suit, and after a siege of two or three months Miss M. with some inward misgivings gave a reluctant assent.† They were married on September 14th, 1782; the union though not an unhappy one, was far from being perfect, as it might have been if there had been unity of religious sentiment. Mr. Wren was a strong Calvinist and his prejudice against the Methodists unconquerable, hence Mrs. W. was under the necessity of giving

* Life of Wm. Wren, p. 28. † Life of Mrs. Pawson, pp. 67, 68.

up some of her dearest associations. Scarcely two years had passed when the tie was dissolved by death and Mr. Wren was removed to the Paradise of God. His remains were interred in Grape Lane Chapel, just below the pulpit.

After the secession of Mr. Wren the chapel in College Street was supplied as before until in 1794 Mr. Whydown was appointed; but in December, 1796 his increased congregation built him a separate place of worship in Jubbergate, which was opened by the Rev. E. Parsons of Leeds, and the Rev. H. Howell, of Knaresborough. The congregation soon formed itself into an Independent Church of which Mr. Whydown was ordained pastor,* and in 1815 the congregation removed to Lendal.

In 1783, Mr. Wesley again reports himself on "*Thurs.*, July 27th, at York.

Frid. 28th. I entered my eightieth year; but blessed be God, my time is not labour and sorrow. I find no more pain or bodily infirmities than at five and twenty. This I still impute 1. To the power of God fitting me to what He calls me to. 2. To my still travelling four or five thousand miles a year. 3. To my sleeping night and day whenever I want it. 4. To my rising at a set hour. And to my constant preaching particularly in the morning.

Sat. 29th. I went on to Leeds." *Journal. Vol. IV, p.* 220.

At the ensuing Conference in London, Mr. John Pawson was appointed to the York Circuit. He says: "My fellow-labourers were neither of them very acceptable to the people; which, added to the affliction of my wife, rendered the year very uncomfortable, yet the Societies increased in some degree."†

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, Vol. I, p. 310.

† Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. IV, p. 50.

In the following spring Mr. Pawson tells us there was little or no rain, and for lack of moisture the corn showed no sign of vegetation. A farmer near Tadcaster came with deep concern to the friend who entertained the preachers and said, "Thomas, I wish you would desire your preachers to pray for rain." The reply was "I was at Selby last Wednesday and heard such a prayer offered to God for rain as I never heard in all my life." "Then" said the farmer "we shall have some." His expectations were not disappointed for the Lord sent a plentiful rain upon the earth and made his heart glad. At the same time another farmer in the neighbouring parish, walking with his minister to church, desired him to read the prayer appointed to be used in time of drought. The reply was, "we may pray as we will but we shall have no rain till the moon change."*

During the Conference of 1783 Mr. Wesley was taken dangerously ill, and much of the business had to be transacted without him. Many fervent prayers were offered up on his behalf and not in vain. Supported by divine grace "he was meek, patient, resigned, and as a little child;" but more than this, he was so far restored as to be able to resume his place among the brethren. Mr. Pawson was re-appointed to the Circuit in company with Messrs. T. Simpson and Charles Atmore. "We came," he says, "to York the very night when that extraordinary ball of fire was seen in the firmament all over the kingdom. I had a clear and distinct view of it for a considerable time. It appeared to me in the form of a very large sugar-loaf of fire exceedingly bright and luminous, so that I was all surrounded with light for some time. It seemed

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXVII, p. 611.

to pass slowly over my head; and when it was gone a considerable space beyond where I stood it appeared to divide into many parts and disappeared."* The year was one of great success for the Lord crowned the labours of His servants with His blessing and added a considerable number to the Societies. This was matter of praise and thanksgiving, yet in consequence of the death of his wife Mr. Pawson left the circuit with painful feelings. In a private letter to Mr. Atmore, written a week or two after his departure he thus expresses his sorrow: "I love the York people from the ground of my heart, but I cannot say I am sorry at leaving the place, as it has been one of bitter distress to me. I do not desire to see it again while I live. Not that I blame the place, nor the people either: they have been kind friends to me. But notwithstanding, I shall ever remember that it was there I was called to give up the choicest temporal blessing that ever the Lord bestowed upon me, and on that account I am inclined to think I shall go mourning all my days."† But "man never continueth in one stay;" sorrow and joy alternate in human experience like shower and sunshine in April, and it is well that it is so. Good Mr. Pawson not only saw York again, but in a little more than twelve months was happily united in marriage to Mrs. Wren—a union of kindred spirits which proved to both an unspeakable blessing. Under the light of his new experience Mr. Pawson wrote again to his friend Atmore as follows: "I was married at York on the 12th of last month. We had a Christian wedding. We all dined at Mr. Fettes' whose great kindness I shall not soon forget. As to my-

* Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. IV, p. 50.

† MS. Letter.

self I do from the ground of my heart praise the Lord who has, I am well satisfied, pointed out my way, and I think I have good reason to believe, has given me a helpmeet—a truly pious, sensible, and goodnatured woman, who, I really believe will be made a blessing to me. And if you will allow me the wish then I pray the Lord may give my Charley just a sister-twin to my Fanny, though she may not be quite as handsome as he could wish. We left York Thursday was sevennight and came very safe to Dunbar on the Saturday following and were most kindly entertained by Dr. Hamilton."

A few weeks before Mr Pawson's removal from York he rode with Mr. Atmore to Pocklington to meet Mr. Wesley who preached from Is. lix. 1. 2., and gave great encouragement to those who were seeking salvation. The entry in the Journal is:

"*Thurs.* June 24th. I preached about one at Pocklington; and in the evening at York, where I enforced 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.'

Frid. 25th. Many were in tears, and a fire seemed to run through the whole congregation while I opened that scripture 'They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.' Such another opportunity we had in the evening while I was explaining the words of our Lord to the centurion, 'Go thy way; and as thou hast believed so be it done unto thee.'

Sat. 26th. About two I preached at Thorne." *Journal. Vol. IV, p.* 269.

On Thursday evening, after preaching, Mr. Wesley met the Society. On Friday morning Mr. Mather preached at five o'clock from Rom. vi. 22. At ten a.m. Wesley preached, at 2 p.m. he held a love-feast; the chapel was well filled

and a number of preachers were present. In the evening he addressed a crowded audience in which were seen "some clergymen" and not a few of the "rich and dignified." The following morning at five o'clock he preached again, from 2 Cor. v. 1-4, and committed the people to the safe keeping of Almighty God in the words of benediction, which the High Priest of old was wont to pronounce upon Israel. After breakfast he took coach for Epworth preaching at Thorne by the way. Pretty good work for an old man just entering on the eighty-second year of his age! Yet, says Mr. Atmore, from whom we gather these particulars, "he retains the full use of his faculties as though he were in the meridian of life."*

The earnest spirit of early Methodism is well illustrated by the following incident which occurred at this time. Margaret Obee, a name well known in Selby, came to York to see her daughter who was nursemaid in a pious family. Here a friend dealt very faithfully with her and reproved her for speaking in a hasty manner. She said, "Margaret, there is the old spirit but we must have it driven out before you leave York." For this purpose Mr. and Mrs. Mather and Mr. Hopkins were invited to spend the day. After dinner Mrs. Fettes opened the attack by informing them that Margaret of all women she ever knew had the most desperate spirit. Margaret trembled and looked self-condemned. Messrs. Mather and Hopkins talked much with her on the necessity of being renewed in love, assuring her that it was the privilege of all God's children. She was greatly humbled and earnestly desirous of having every unholy temper and disposition destroyed. While engaged in prayer she received such a large measure of

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. LXVIII, p. 12.

the Divine Spirit that she felt satisfied that the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed her from all sin. The happiness of her soul was visible on her countenance, and on her return home her children looked upon her with astonishment.*

The erection of the preacher's house adjoining Peaseholme Green chapel appears to have involved the circuit in financial difficulty. Of the total cost £305, only £60 was raised by subscription; the interest of the remainder forming an annual charge upon the circuit funds. To relieve this burden which was felt to be increasingly inconvenient, a resolution was passed at the Quarterly Meeting, held March 27th, 1786, to the following effect:

"This being the quarter-day and the stewards present having taken into consideration the debt upon the preacher's house in this city, they have mutually agreed that, in order to reduce the same, every Society throughout the Circuit shall every year, send in a double sum at the Michaelmas quarter-day, which additional sum shall be applied to the paying off the said sum of £245, which is the present debt upon the said preacher's house; for witness whereof the Stewards now present with the Preachers have signed their names.

Alex. Mather,	Matt. Skilbeck,	J. Vickers,
Jer. Robertshaw,	Jon. Robinson,	Adam Dustan,
John Crosby,	Richard Heels,	Thos. Coulson,
Thos. Dodgson,	John Hields,	Jo. Pallister,
Wm. Robinson,	Rob. Bussey,	J. Wiseman,
Wm. Frear,	Thos. Vasey,	T. Richardson,
Francis Gawtrey,	Wm. Sanderson,	Thos. Yeoman,
John Hawkins,	Robert Hobson."†	

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXXIV, p. 851. † Stewards' Book.

By this means the debt was gradually reduced, but it was some years before it was completely extinguished.

Under date March 20th, 1786, Mr. Wesley wrote from Birmingham to Mr. Thomas Tattersall, of Derby, as follows:

"Dear Tommy,—I expect to be at Macclesfield April 1st, Manchester, Wedn. 4th, Warrington, Saty. 15th, Halifax, Mondy. 24th, York, Thu. May 4th, Newcastle, Fr. 12th, at Newcastle again, June 3rd, at Nottingham, Saty. July 8th. Then I am to visit Derby, Hinkley, and Birmingham. I allow two nights for Derby. Dispose of them in the manner you think best. But I am apt to imagine it would be most advisable to preach at Belper about noon.

But is it not best to take Derby in my way from Sheffield to Nottingham?—I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother,—J. Wesley."

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."

He reached York according to appointment, and found two of the churches opened to receive him.

"*Thurs.* May 4th. Preaching at Tadcaster in the way, in the evening I preached at York.

Sun. 7th. In the morning I preached at St Saviour's church thoroughly filled with serious hearers; and in the afternoon at St. Margaret's, which was overfilled, many being constrained to go away. We had a love-feast in the evening at which many artlessly testified what God had done for their souls. I have not for many years known this Society in so prosperous a condition. This is undoubtedly owing first, to the exact discipline which has for some time been observed among them; and next to the strongly and continually exhorting the believers to 'go on unto perfection.'

Mon. 8th. I preached about one in the new house at

Easingwold and in the evening at Thirsk." *Journal. Vol. IV, p.* 316.

Mr. Wesley's extreme age rendered it probable that each visit would be his last; it is therefore not surprising that his congregations were overflowing. Persons of all classes flocked to hear him; in not a few instances curiosity proved stronger than prejudice; and in many more he was loved and venerated as a father. But his spirit now verging on heaven was little moved either by the frowns or applauses of men. It was on one of his last visits that he referred in his discourse to the fact that Mr. Brown of Haddington on his death-bed had, in reckoning up the mercies of God, acknowledged His having kept him from "following that man of sin John Wesley." "So he expressed himself," said the venerable preacher; but added, rubbing his hands with glee and looking upward, "I hope to meet John Brown in heaven and to join him in the praises of God and the Lamb."

In 1788, Mr. Wesley passed a few days in the neighbourhood of York. Leaving Hull on Monday morning, he visited Hotham, Market Weighton, Pocklington, Thirsk, Ripon, Selby, and Thorne, all in four days, preaching at every place and in the city of York twice. "On *Mon.* June 23rd, from Rom. xiii. 12. when 'The word was as fire; and all that heard it seemed to feel the power thereof,' and again on *Wed.* 25th from the parable of the sower, 'which God applied to the hearts of most of the congregation.'" *Journal. Vol. IV, p.* 409. By appointment Mr. Robert Spence breakfasted with him the next morning at three o'clock at Mr. Preston's where he usually stayed. His carriage was ordered to be at the door at four o'clock. "Mind," he said as he gave directions to the

coachman, "I do not mean a quarter or five minutes past." The man knew his love of punctuality, and just as the minster clock was striking four, Wesley bid good-bye to his friends and entered the carriage.* His last visit took place in May 1790; unfortunately the MS. of Mr. Wesley's Journal is defective at this date, but the following paragraph occurs in the *York Courant* of May 4th. "On Saturday last the Rev. Mr. Wesley arrived in this city where he preached that evening and twice on Sunday. When it is considered that he is now near his 90th year, who can withhold their surprise that at such an age this truly venerable man should be capable of the exertions he now uses." From the unpublished diary of Mr. Thos. Taylor we learn that he preached again on the Monday evening May 3rd. He says, "I went to York and was amazed to meet such a number of travelling preachers, fifteen or sixteen of them. Mr. Wesley preached a useful sermon; and after preaching we had a meeting respecting one of our number who was accused of drunkenness."†

The mother of the writer, then a girl of nine years old, was present at one or more of these last services and retained up to old age a distinct impression of the venerable form of the preacher. Perhaps the impression was all the more vivid as on descending from the pulpit he placed his hands on her head and gave her his blessing. Her brother the Rev. John Burdsall, who was a few years older, was also present and used to relate with relish the following characteristic incident. Wesley's fine ear for music and correct taste are well known. During the singing some discordant notes grated harshly on his ear, which at the

* Memoir of R. Spence, p. 35.

† Tyerman's Wesley, Vol. III, p. 606.

end of the verse called forth some observations which he finished up by saying, "Now listen to Bro. Masterman," who was the leading singer. As this did not produce the desired effect, he stopped again and said "listen to me." But the cracked voice of the old man of nearly ninety failed to do its office and the effect was somewhat ludicrous.

Wesley's preaching was remarkable for its simplicity, clear logical order, and scriptural fulness. Two months later he preached at Lincoln from "One thing is needful," Luke x. 42. As the congregation retired, a lady exclaimed in a tone of great surprise, "Is this the great Mr. Wesley, of whom we hear so much in the present day? Why the poorest person in the chapel might have understood him." The gentleman to whom the remark was made, replied, "In this, madam, he displays his greatness; that while the poorest can understand him, the most learned are edified and cannot be offended."*

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XLVIII. p. 25.

CHAPTER XI.

The Roll of Membership. 1787.

Mr. Wesley died March 2nd, 1791, and it will be convenient here to pause awhile and see what had been accomplished within the limits of the York Circuit during his lifetime. When separated from Leeds in 1758 it included, besides the Ainsty, the whole of the East Riding and about half of the North Riding. At his decease the following towns with the places adjacent to them had been formed into separate circuits. Scarborough and Hull in 1770, Thirsk in 1774, Whitby in 1783 and Pocklington in 1786. Thirty-six places remained to York in nine of which chapels had been built, viz: York in 1759, Tadcaster in 1774, Ulleskelf in 1780, Haxby in 1782, Easingwold in 1785, Selby in 1785, Acomb, Tockwith and Wistow in 1790.* The number of members in the city was 236, and in the country 638. Total in the Circuit 874.

The following table exhibits the progressive development of Methodism in the circuit from the year 1766 when the number of members was first reported in the Minutes of Conference, up to the present year 1884. The first column contains a list of the circuits now on the ground; the second, the year of their formation; and the rest, the number of members in each, at intervals of twenty-five years, except the last which only admits of eighteen. In 1770 the Scarbro' circuit included Hull; this was reversed in 1771, but in 1775 they appear as separate circuits.

* Miles's Chronological History, pp. 332-4.

CIRCUITS.	When formed	NUMBER OF MEMBERS.					
		1766	1791	1816	1841	1866	1884
York, New Street	1758	982	874	1916	2562	2787	2238
Wesley	1867	...	—	—	—	—	1139
Hull, George Yard	1770	...	664	2000	1724	1557	1785
Waltham-street	1839	...	—	—	1700	2214	2110
Gt. Thornton-st.	1872	...	—	—	—	—	1855
Scarbro'	1770	...	621	670	1564	1756	1573
Thirsk	1774	...	629	750	902	1052	597
Whitby	1783	...	545	728	1114	776	735
Pocklington	1786	...	834	1050	1103	883	674
Bridlington	1791	...	...	800	1310	1161	934
Stockton	1792	...	...	623	1004	610	1135
Malton	1794	...	...	700	1405	970	970
Ripon	1795	...	...	770	900	883	1120
Howden	1798	...	...	590	1005	973	757
Easingwold	1800	...	...	646	1128	797	672
Darlington	1805	...	...	675	662	874	1198
Driffield	1809	...	...	708	733	846	1076
Guisbro' }	1811	...	...	620	—	770	1011
Stokesley }	1829	...	...	—	679	489	474
Bedale and Tanfield	1811	...	...	450	900	780	380
Pickering	1812	...	...	562	904	1167	541
Patrington, Withernsea	1812	...	...	346	411	476	555
Selby	1812	...	...	700	957	1176	1205
Snaith	1815	...	...	890	764	520	440
Knaresbro'	1816	...	...	700	765	642	560
Beverley	1824	...	...	...	840	737	927
Tadcaster	1826	...	...	...	845	900	719
Hornsea	1835	...	...	...	502	350	491
Harrogate	1858	...	...	...	...	256	424
Filey	1862	...	...	...	...	168	338
Danby	1863	...	...	...	...	355	305
Goole	1864	...	...	...	...	417	429
Helmsley	1866	...	...	...	...	325	329
Northallerton	1866	...	...	...	...	...	354
Kirby Moorside	1869	...	...	...	...	...	489
Sherburn	1869	...	...	...	...	...	602
Loftus	1871	...	...	...	...	...	429
Market Weighton	1876	...	...	...	...	...	152
Totals		982	4167	16894	26383	27667	31722

From this tabular statement it appears there are now 38 Circuits within the original limits of the York Round, and that the members multiplied within the first hundred years nearly thirty-fold. The small increase between 1841 and 1866 is accounted for by the losses that followed the storm of 1848.

In 1791 Samuel Hodgson was the Superintendent—"a man of unblemished character, and of a generous spirit.

He acquired a good deal of knowledge and walked humbly with God." After labouring successfully in York for two years he removed to Sunderland, where his life was suddenly terminated by a melancholy accident. Crossing the Wear after preaching, the boat, which was overcrowded, got foul of a rope and he with about twenty other passengers was plunged into the river and drowned. As the boat went down he was heard to exclaim "Lord Jesus receive my spirit, and have mercy on my fellow-sufferers." Nine days after, his body was found uninjured on the sea coast about two miles distant from the place where the accident occurred. The next day it was consigned to the tomb in the presence of more than a thousand deeply affected spectators.*

In former times the Superintendent was required to keep an exact list of all the members in his circuit, a copy of which was to be forwarded to Mr. Wesley or the Conference. From this he prepared the class paper which was changed every quarter. This practice continued until the multiplication of the members rendered it a serious labour, and the class paper was superseded by the class book, somewhere about the year 1819. The York rolls of membership extend from 1787 to 1818, and furnish us with some interesting facts. The number of leaders in the city at the former date was ten, viz: Richard Burdsall, Robert Spence, Thomas Chapel, Jane Wilson, Samuel Lord, George Fettes, James Simpson, Thomas Pears, Elizabeth Fettes and Anna Whitefield. Of the 208 members who composed the Society, no less than 78 were meeting in private band, and 33 in the select society. Many modern Methodists will hardly understand these

* Atmore's Memorial, p. 198.

terms, but the private bands consisted of two or three persons who met weekly for prayer and confidential intercourse; they were divided into four classes, married men, and single men; married women, and single women; and the select society included only such as either enjoyed or were earnestly seeking the blessing of entire sanctification. In the 8vo Minutes of Conference, Vol. I. p. 22* we find the following questions and answers. "Q. 1. How are the people divided who desire to be under your care? A. The united Societies, the Bands, the select Societies and the Penitents. Q. 2. How do these differ from each other? A. The united Societies, which are the largest of all, consist of awakened persons; part of these who are supposed to have remission of sins, are more closely united into Bands; those of the Bands who seem to walk in the light of God, compose the select Societies; those of them who are for the present fallen from grace, meet apart as Penitents." Questions 3 and 4 refer to the rules of the united Societies and the Bands, which are the same as are now in use. "Q. 5. What are the rules of the select Societies? A. The same as those of the United Societies and the Bands; and these three (1) Let nothing spoken in this Society be spoken again, no, not even to the members of it. (2) Every member agrees absolutely to submit to his minister in *all indifferent things*. (3) Every man, till we can have all things in common, will bring once a week bonâ fide all he can spare toward a common stock. Q. 6. Are there any peculiar rules for the Penitents? A. Not yet." The importance which Mr. Wesley attached to the class and band meeting is well expressed in these words: "Never omit meeting your

* Last edition.

class or band; never absent yourself from any public meeting. These are the very *sinews* of our Society; and whatever weakens, or tends to weaken, our regard for these or our exactness in attending them, strikes at the very root of our community. As one saith: 'That part of our economy, the private weekly meetings for prayer, examination and particular exhortation, have been the greatest means of deepening and confirming every blessing that was received by the word preached, and of diffusing it to others, who could not attend the public ministry; whereas without this connexion and intercourse, the most ardent attempts, by mere preaching, have been of no lasting use.'"*

Among the members at this period two names occur which are of more than local interest. John Doncaster came to York in March, 1788, two years after his conversion, and here obtained the full assurance of salvation. In June he took a violent cold, and for several months was threatened with consumption. During his affliction he was painfully convinced that he had grieved the Spirit of God by resisting a call to preach the gospel. At length he says, "one evening these words ran through my mind, 'I have afflicted thee because of thy disobedience to the heavenly call, but will raise thee up again on condition that thou wilt hereafter be obedient.' To which I answered, 'Lord, I will be obedient.' A few days after I was desired to take the following recipe: One spoonful of honey, one of oatmeal, a piece of butter the size of a walnut, and the yolk of an egg; upon this, well beaten together, I was to pour one English pint of boiling water, and stir the whole together. I took it for a few nights, when going to bed. This by the blessing of God removed the in-

* Wesley's Works, Vol. II, p. 416.

veterate cough I had laboured under, and which had long baffled medical skill." The value of this simple receipt in cases of severe cold is undeniable. Mr. Doncaster entered the itinerancy in 1790, and travelled nearly forty years.

The other name is that of Richard Waddy, who joined the Society at Newton-on-Ouse in 1789, and afterwards met in class with Samuel Lord in York; where he obtained the assurance of Divine mercy while praying on the city walls, and shortly after began to preach. In 1793 he commenced his itinerancy, and after sixty-one years of faithful ministerial labour, during which he enjoyed almost uninterrupted health, he fell asleep in Jesus.

Attached to the record of 1795 there is a list of the local preachers; this would imply that as yet there was no printed plan of the York Circuit. The Superintendent had to prepare the draft and used to employ a person to write out a copy in a fair and legible hand for each of the preachers. The names are as follows: "Richard Burdsall, Robert Spence, Thomas Chapel, Thos. Peart, *William Amos*, *Robert Thyrkle*, *John Dawson*, James Pears, *John Burdsall*, who was on trial; *Thomas Wilkinson*, Gate Helmsley; John Pallister, Stillingfleet; John Maskill, Ryther; John Hobson, Tockwith; and W. Smith, Easingwold, in the Malton circuit." As these fourteen brethren had forty places to supply, some of which were from ten to fifteen miles distant, in times when the people were too poor to provide horse-hire, some estimate may be formed of their noble and self-denying services. They usually preached two or three times every Sabbath, walking ten, twenty, or even thirty miles in all weathers; and shared equally with the itinerants, or as sometimes called the rounders, the rudeness and brutality of the mob. They

were men constrained by personal conviction and inward experience to make known to their fellowmen the way of salvation. Excepting the five whose names are in italics they were all leaders of classes and may be taken as a fair representation of the real working power of the Circuit, not forgetting that they were effectively supported by a few devoted women.

When in York, Mr. Wesley usually made his home at Mr. Roger Preston's in Petergate, or Mr. George Fettes' in Lady Peckitt's Yard, but on the occasion of his last visit he seems to have been entertained by Mr. Joseph Agar.* It is however certain that he supped on the Saturday evening at Mr. Preston's in Petergate. There were also present William Fowler, Richard Burdsall,† and several others including no doubt Robert Spence and Joseph Agar. This, remembering that it was the last visit of our venerable founder, was certainly a remarkable gathering, as it included the five men who of all others, were the most prominent and influential in York Methodism during a period of nearly four-score years. Of Mr. Preston and Mr. Fowler, who were both now well-stricken in years, we know little, save that they had shared in the early struggles of Methodism, and side by side for many years discharged the duties of circuit-stewardship. Of the three last, Mr. Burdsall and Mr. Spence were in the meridian of life, and Mr. Agar in the prime. These three, like David's first three, were mighty men in our Israel. For more than thirty years after this they laboured together in harmonious unity, and left an impression on the York Society, which contributed very largely to its present prosperity and

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. LXXIII. p. 1130.

† Burdsall's Memoir, p. 241.

success. Widely different in many respects, they were all alike gifted with that steady purpose and decision of character which are essential to great achievement. A brief notice of each will complete our view of the York Society at this critical period in its history.

Richard Burdsall was born on the 14th of March, 1735, in the parish of Kirby-Overblow. As a youth, vivacious and full of fun, he was the leading spirit among his companions, but at the same time the subject of strong religious feelings. When sixteen years old he heard the apostolic Grimshaw at Bingley. "The people," he says "sang like thunder, and the preacher's voice in prayer seemed as if it had been the voice of an angel." Under this sermon the Holy Spirit shed light upon his soul and discovered to him his lost and perishing condition. He hastened home the next day to tell his parents, and to warn them of their danger, but to his surprise and grief instead of sympathy, met only with derision. For some years he sought rest for his soul, but having no one to direct him to the Friend of sinners, found none. At length the Methodists came into the neighbourhood. The first class was formed in the adjoining village of Pannall after a sermon by Mr. Christopher Hopper. John Pawson then living at Harewood offered himself as the first member, Richard Burdsall was the second, and fourteen more followed.* Shortly after, while reading Charles Wesley's sermon on "Awake thou that sleepest," his distress was such that he fell down in a flood of tears and vowed never more to sleep until he had found peace with God. From that Sunday till the following Friday he did not close his eyes. Then his bonds were broken. While plying his

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. LI. p. 439.

daily task a great and unusual calm came upon his spirit and he began to sing. "As I sang," he says, "I wept; and yet my sorrow was so mingled with joy as to be unspeakable and full of glory." The change was decisive and was soon demonstrated in practice. A youth, sent by his father, came and desired him to make him some nails. He asked for what purpose they were intended. "To make a coop for some game birds," was the reply. "Go" said he, "and tell thy father, I will not make him any, for I have determined never to drive another nail into the devil's tent while I live."

One Sunday a young man told him of a person who was sanctified and walked continually in the light of God's countenance. This awakened a new chord in the centre of his soul, and he resolved not to rest until he enjoyed a similar blessing. He sought it in the word, in the means of grace, in Christian converse, and above all by earnest importunate prayer, until he could say: "I knew that Jesus was not only *in* me but *all* to me. I saw that I was saved by a continual looking to Jesus, and by a steadfast reliance on Him. And I could say with Isaiah 'Here am I, send me.'" His faith and resolution were before long unexpectedly put to the test; a series of circumstances forced upon him the conviction that it was his duty to preach; a work from which he shrank with a deep consciousness of his own insufficiency, but after many and painful conflicts he yielded himself to what was evidently the call of God.

As a preacher he soon became popular; the manifest power which accompanied his words, his intense earnestness, his knowledge of Scripture, his quaint and pithy illustrations together with a slight touch of eccentricity

and an occasional flow of wit, attracted large crowds of all sorts. After announcing his text he usually closed the Bible and placed it on the seat behind him, not irreverently, but to secure perfect freedom of action, for he was "mighty in the Scriptures," quoting passage after passage in support of his statements, and always referring to the places where they might be found. This was so common with him that in many villages he was known by the name of "chapter and verse." By some pointed remark he usually rivetted his audience at once, and kept up their interest throughout. His voice was good; his light blue eye sparkled as the sacred fire began to glow, and his action which judged by artificial rules, would have been pronounced ungraceful, was at least earnest and effective. His language was homely and vigorous, easily understood by the people, and if now and then occurred a broad stroke of humour that raised a smile, there was concealed under it a barbed arrow which not unfrequently went straight home to the conscience. Whatever was his text, Christ was his theme, and he loved to dilate on the benefits of the atonement. "Look at these grey hairs," said he, a few weeks before his death, while he took hold of his snowy locks, "if every one of these were a soul, I would venture it upon His merit." "There must have been the best qualities of a preacher in one who was heard with respectful attention by all classes of the Christian public; who never failed to attract large numbers wherever he went; who kept up the interest of a weekly service in the city until increasing infirmities obliged him to omit it once a fortnight; and who, above all, was honoured in being made the instrument of turning hundreds of sinners to God."*

* Biographical sketch by the Rev. John Hartley.

As before stated, Mr. Burdsall travelled on the York Circuit in 1779—80. In 1782, he came to reside in York and found here an ample sphere of usefulness. Besides preaching almost every sabbath two or three times, he held for many years weekly services in Coppergate and also in Coffee Yard, in the room formerly occupied by Thomas Gent the famous York printer. In 1788, Mr. Wesley at the instance of Thomas Rutherford, appointed him again to the York Circuit, but believing that he could better serve the Master in a private capacity he declined the honour. For the same reason he refused six invitations to take charge of Independent congregations. In so doing he was probably right, for he exerted a powerful influence upon the York Society as a class leader. At one time he had in charge more than a hundred members, and his classes, which were repeatedly divided, steadily increased until the close of life.

Many characteristic anecdotes, not recorded in his memoirs, are still current respecting this venerable servant of God, with one of which we close this imperfect sketch. Riding one Sunday morning to Stutton near Tadcaster, where he had engaged to preach a funeral sermon, he was arrested by three thoughtless young men, who having some knowledge of his eccentric character resolved to make merry with him. They insisted upon his preaching a sermon to them before he went any further. To this he assented on condition that they dismounted and knelt down on the road while he prayed. This was done, and such was the effect of his earnest supplications on their behalf that two of them consented to accompany him to the service; one was converted the same day and the other shortly afterward, and one became a useful minister.

Robert Spence was born March 8th 1748, at Stillington, and like his friend Burdsall was the son of a blacksmith. At an early age he was employed in the service of the notorious Lawrence Sterne, where freed from restraint he lost the impressions of childhood, and "became outwardly wicked," but about the age of fifteen he was powerfully awakened to a sense of his danger and soon after joined the Methodists. His conversion and subsequent success in business have been already mentioned; but in 1784 when the Rev. Alexander Mather was stationed in York, one of whose favourite themes was Christian holiness, he was encouraged to the pursuit of it, and especially sought deliverance from what he believed to be his "besetting sins, frivolity of spirit and trifling conversation." Nor did he seek in vain. "He became a partaker of the blessing of entire sanctification; he exemplified it in his life; and he insisted upon it in his sermons." In one of these, founded on 1 Thess. v. 23, 24, he defines it as "being saved from every temper contrary to love, and every desire contrary to the will of God;" represents it as evinced "by the ability to depend wholly and constantly upon God, to rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks." As to the mode of its attainment he remarks "There must be a firm belief of the doctrine, with at least some proper views of it and a hearty conviction that we stand in need of it. We must remember it is the work of God; which will prevent us from thinking it impossible. We must seek it in the appointed means and receive it upon God's own terms. We must also be willing to give up all for it, and not only so, but to venture for all; one of which is equally necessary as the other." To retain it —"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in

Him. Having given up all into the hands of God let all remain there."*

If Mr. Spence's style of preaching was not so popular and attractive as Mr. Burdsall's, it was more instructive and edifying. What the one gathered the other built up. Mr. Spence was gifted with a sober judgment which was improved by his familiarity with books and bookish men, and sanctified by grace. He was thus eminently qualified to contribute to the stability and development of the church in which he had been nourished and brought up and to which he was firmly attached. Once only in a long life was he tempted to forsake it. He had published a Pocket Hymnbook in which he had included many of Mr. Wesley's most popular hymns. As this occurred just at the time Mr. Wesley was contemplating a similar volume, the latter in his preface reflected upon the action of the York bookseller in vigorous terms. The sharp passage between these two excellent men was soon forgiven and forgotten, and when they next met it was in a friendly spirit. Years after Mr. Spence alluded to the matter at the Whit-Tuesday love-feast in the following terms: "My brethren, several of you have spoken of the Lord's gracious dealings with you; and I have remarked, that you have generally concluded by telling us how many years you have been in the Methodist Society. One has told us that he has been seven years; another twelve; another fifteen; and another twenty. Many of you have also said, 'That you never had a temptation to leave it.' I have been thirty-four years in the Society, and I acknowledge before you all, that I once had a very strong temptation to leave it and to have nothing more to do with the Meth-

* Memoir of R. Spence, p. 50.

odists." At this remark, a profound stillness pervaded the meeting and every eye and every ear was directed to the speaker. "Yes," he added, "I once had a very strong temptation to leave the Methodists: but I thought within myself, I will do nothing rashly; I will exercise my reason, and weigh carefully the matter on each side before I come to a conclusion. I reasoned thus: 'Suppose I leave the Methodists, they can do without me; they will never miss me; they will go on, as they have gone on from the beginning, without me. But on the other side, how shall I do without them? The little religion I have, I obtained among them. Had it not been for the Methodists, for anything I know to the contrary, I might to this day, have remained a cursing, swearing chaise-driver. The religious friends that I have, whose sentiments and experience correspond with my own are all Methodists. The means of grace and religious instruction by which my soul prospers I find among the same people. Now, if I yield to the temptation and leave them, what people, what means shall I substitute in their place? Shall I not be in danger of mixing with the world,—of imbibing the spirit of unconverted men,—of losing the religion I possess,—and in the end, of losing my own soul?' When I had thus reasoned on the case, the force of the temptation was completely broken; and having obtained help of God I continue to this day."* This address, given as it was, at a time when the Society was still feeling the swell occasioned by recent agitation, had a powerful effect and we quote it to show the true spirit of the man and the kind of influence he exerted. It is needless to say that Mr. Spence took a leading part in all church matters, and

* Memoir of R. Spence, p. 37.

especially in those that concerned the exercise of Christian benevolence. His classes did not reproduce themselves like Mr. Burdsall's, but they trained up strong men and women, who were fitted either to endure the scorching heat of the sun or withstand the fury of the storm. The debt which York Methodism owes to these two remarkable men will be perhaps best appreciated, when we state that out of forty leaders appointed between the years 1787 and 1817, fully half were selected from their classes, and what is a little singular in equal proportion.

Joseph Agar was born at Kilburn under the Hambleton Hills, March 25th, 1761. His parents were strict church people and brought him up in exact conformity with the requirements of their religious views. On his apprenticeship in York, he attended the ministry of the Rev. William Richardson, whose earnest appeals awakened his slumbering conscience; but he sought to silence the voice of the inward monitor amid the excitement of worldly amusement and pleasure. At this time he was a bitter opponent of the Methodists, and was first led to modify his aversion by hearing Mr. John Hampson deliver a discourse in Thursday Market. How he came to cast in his lot with a people whom he despised and how in London he obtained the "pearl of great price" has been narrated above. On his return to York he entered into partnership with Mr. Wadman, his quondam fellow-apprentice, and succeeded by God's blessing in establishing a lucrative business. About 1783-4 he married Miss Hawkswell, the daughter of a good Methodist in York, who proved an excellent helpmeet, and was like himself a humble follower of the Lamb. His faithful friend and counsellor John Atlay, hearing of his fair

prospects, wrote him the following pithy epistle, under date, April 25th, 1788.

"My dear lad.—Keep close to God; guard against the world; if you prosper in business the ungodly will fawn upon you, and will (if they can) draw you forward into parish business and city business; I should be sorry to hear that you are Lord Mayor of York. May you and yours ever be kept at the feet of Jesus, and as little children enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I am with much love to Sister Agar;—Your truly affectionate, John Atlay."

Without any remarkable intellectual endowments, Mr. Agar possessed great business talent combined with singular decision of character, hence he soon rose in general esteem and accumulated considerable wealth. These advantages he cheerfully consecrated to God in the service of His church. He often used to say, "I began, and *became rich by giving away*." Unsectarian in his views, his liberality was freely extended beyond the bounds of his own community. In the progress of Methodism and the extension of the work of God he took great delight, and though never engaged as a local preacher or class leader, often accompanied his brethren into new and perilous districts as their guide and protector. After entertaining Mr. Wesley on his last visit he went with him on his round to Whitby and a number of other places. In 1812 he was elected Sheriff of the city, and as in those days civic honours were not often conferred on members of the Methodist body, he was long known among his own people as Sheriff Agar. His highest praise was a life of humble, constant, and devoted service in the cause of Christ, which as will afterward appear, he was always ready to support with his influence and with his purse.

CHAPTER XII.

The Sunday School, 1790—1800.

Miss Hannah Ball,* a member of the Methodist Society, established a Sunday School at High Wycomb in 1769. For this work she was well qualified and reaped both pleasure and success from her toil. Isolated examples of a similar kind may have existed in other places. But to Mr. Raikes of Gloucester is due the credit of bringing this important subject before the public. This he did in an article published November 3rd, 1783, in the "Gloucester Journal," of which he was the proprietor and printer. In the following year he gave an account of the establishment of a Sunday School at Painswick in Gloucestershire. Both Wesley and Fletcher perceived the value of the new institution and recommended its adoption by the Methodist Societies. The latter set the example by commencing a school in Madeley in 1784. Three hundred children were soon collected, whose instruction he personally superintended until the week before his death. One day he found considerable difficulty in fixing the attention of the children upon the text he wished to enforce, for just then a robin flew in and every eye was diverted. "Now," he said, "you can attend to that robin. Well, I will take that robin for my text," and proceeded to give them a simple homily on the harmlessness of the little creature, and the tender care of the Creator. As the number of children rapidly increased, he drew up a plan for estab-

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. 69, p. 561.

lishing one school for boys, and one for girls in each of the following places; Coalbrook-Dale, Madeley and Madeley Wood. He also wrote a paper on the advantages likely to arise from Sunday Schools, and contemplated the preparation of several little tracts for their use; but his ready pen was arrested by the hand of death. Wesley's first notice of the Sunday School occurs in his Journal on July 18th, 1784. "I preached morning and afternoon in Bingley Church. Before service I stepped into the Sunday School, which contains two hundred and forty children, taught every Sunday by several masters, and superintended by the curate. I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?"

April 16th, 1786 he preached at Bolton and remarks: "The house was crowded, the more because of five hundred and forty children, who are taught in our Sunday Schools. Such an army of them got about me, when I came out of the chapel that I could scarce disengage myself from them." Again, July 27th, 1787, "Thence we went to Bolton. Here are eight hundred children taught in our Sunday Schools by about eighty masters, who receive no pay but what they are to receive from their Great Master. About a hundred of them (part boys and part girls) are taught to sing; and they sang so true, that all singing together, there seemed to be but one voice." . . . "In the evening, many of the children still hovering about the house, I desired forty or fifty to come in and sing 'Vital spark of heavenly flame.' Although some of them were silent, not being able to sing for tears; yet the harmony was such, as I believe could not be

equalled in the King's Chapel." In a letter to the Rev. Charles Atmore dated March 24th, 1790, he writes: "I am glad you have set up Sunday Schools in Newcastle. This is one of the best institutions which have been seen in Europe for some centuries, and will do more and more good, provided the teachers and inspectors do their duty. Nothing can prevent the success of this blessed work but the neglect of the instruments. Therefore be sure to watch them with all care that they may not grow weary in well doing."

The York Methodists followed suit; a Sunday School was commenced in Peasholme Green chapel in 1791, chiefly through the persevering efforts of a young man in humble circumstances named John Lupton. His father Jonathan was a devoted local preacher and class-leader at High Bishopside, in the romantic vale of Nidderdale, and great grandson of a former incumbent of the parish. John was born November 18th, 1765, and carefully nurtured in the fear of the Lord, but did not enter into the full liberty of the gospel until the eighteenth year of his age, when he was converted under a sermon preached by William Shent at Pateley Bridge. After completing his apprenticeship as a linen weaver he found his way to Stockton-on-the-Forest, and entered the service of Mr. John Woodcock, a useful local preacher and leader in the York circuit, who watched over him with a father's care. From Stockton John removed to York and joined the prayer-leaders, whose services were then extended to the villages of the circuit. About the end of 1790 or the beginning of 1791 he paid a visit to his brother at Bolton, and whilst there, took the opportunity of inspecting the Sunday School which was exciting so much attention.

What he there saw and heard made such a deep impression on his heart that on his return to York, he went at once to his old master to whom he gave a glowing account of what he had witnessed, and urged him to join in commencing a similar institution in York. The venerable man fell in with his views and having procured a copy of the rules from Bolton, they proceeded to canvas the city for subscribers. Some cordially approved, but others bitterly opposed, regarding the project as hostile to the interests of the Church Sunday School, which had been established five years before, and in which several Methodists were engaged as teachers. The scheme seemed likely to miscarry, but John, not to be discouraged, mentioned the matter to Richard Burdsall and read him some letters, describing the blessed spiritual results which had been secured in Bolton. Mr. B. was delighted and agreed to accompany him to Mr. Edward Jackson, who was then superintendent of the circuit. The issue was the opening of the school on the 3rd of April, 1791. A few weeks later John wrote to a friend: "The Lord has not set us to work without His blessing; He has already begun to work upon some of their young minds. Glory be to God! We see He can still make use of rams' horns, earthen pitchers, or anything." In the same letter he details the mode of conducting the school and adds: "a number of girls write in the forenoon and a number of boys in the afternoon."

The introduction of writing was however regarded by the trustees and others as a desecration of the Lord's day and considerable opposition arose, which for a time imperilled the continuance of the school. Eventually a meeting of trustees, stewards, leaders and Sunday school

teachers was convened to consider the whole matter. The chief objectors were Mr. Coates, a paid teacher in the Church School, who complained that his scholars were drawn away; and Mr. Fettes, the president of the prayer-leaders, who to use John Lupton's words "brought an indictment against them for getting his men away." However, Richard Burdsall, Robert Spence, and James Simpson came to the rescue, and after two hours discussion it was amicably agreed that the school should be carried on as before. "I was so delighted," says John "with our night's work that I could not get to sleep till after one o'clock."

According to the announcement at the time, the school was opened for the instruction of "servants, apprentices, and the children of the rich and the poor;" and in four months numbered 230 scholars. At the outset the expense was defrayed by private subscriptions; John Lupton and his aunt being the largest contributors. The first public collection in aid of the funds was made on the 17th of May, 1795, which realised seven guineas. All the teachers and other officers gave their labour gratuitously from the beginning, although in other schools each teacher was paid two shillings per Sabbath for his services. The promoters of this good work soon had their hearts gladdened by the hearty co-operation of their ministers, Messrs. S. Hodgson, J. Beanland, and W. Blagbourne, and other friends; and still more by reaping the precious fruit of their toil. A children's society-class was formed before the end of a year under the care of Mr. Woodcock, which numbered eighteen members, several of whom gave satisfactory evidence of a change of heart. Among the names of those who were the first-fruits of the Methodist Sabbath School

in York we find William Wade, afterwards a valuable leader; also John Burdsall, who a few years later entered the Methodist ministry and offered himself to Dr. Coke as a missionary to Bermuda. After he had been duly ordained for this purpose, his father, now an old man demurred to his going abroad, and the Doctor kindly released him from his engagement. The letter of Dr. Coke on the subject is so characteristic of his generous disposition that we insert it.

"My dear Brother.—I thank you for your last kind letter. I assure you, I esteem you much, and can in some degree enter into the feelings of a son and a father. I once had a father, the tenderest parent, methinks, that ever lived! I could not have found it in my heart to grieve him, unless duty to God bound me so to do, in the clearest and most coercive manner. You have acted in the same way, and may thy days be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and *eternal* in the land which the Lord thy God hath *promised* thee!

You should not have returned the money advanced for outfit if I could have afforded to replace it myself. I have sent you back the 'Letters of Orders.' Mr. Bradburn or you may be the keeper of them, as Mr. B. judges best. God bless you. I am your truly affectionate friend and brother, T. Coke."

For nearly ten years the Sunday School was carried on successfully and attended with many proofs of God's blessing, when for some reason, not explained, the trustees withheld the use of the chapel, and it was discontinued on the 25th of August, 1800. It seems not unlikely that this was one of the results of the movement originated by Alex. Kilham, which at this time was disturbing the

peace of the Methodist societies. From the beginning, the managers of the school, as amply appears from John Lupton's letters, had shown a disposition to act independently of the preachers and trustees, and were probably stimulated by the influences around them to assume such an attitude as rendered the action of the Trustees a painful necessity. Whatever was the cause, the discontinuance of the school was a calamity; the children's class, so happily commenced, gradually declined until it expired altogether, and for a period of ten years no special efforts were made by the York Methodists for the instruction of the young.

The death of Wesley, as was foreseen, produced a crisis in Methodism, the severity of which was less felt in York than many other places. It is no secret that our venerable founder was exceedingly anxious to retain his societies in union with the established church of which he regarded himself as a member to the close of life, and to accomplish this object no one can deny that he did his very best, notwithstanding the ungenerous treatment he had received in many quarters. But the disposal of events was not in his power. God, who had honoured him as the instrument of gathering many souls into true Christian fellowship with one another and with Jesus Christ, took charge of His own work and shaped its course. The union of Methodism with the Church was become impracticable. It might possibly have grown up within it if those concerned had allowed it to do so, but as an organized system it could not be incorporated. The bishops and clergy would no doubt have welcomed the adhesion of the people, but they could not tolerate the system, to say nothing of its spirit. On the other hand the 95,000 members of

Society left by Mr. Wesley loved their own services, and were little likely to be attracted by a Church, which for fully half a century had treated them as enthusiasts and fanatics. While Mr. Wesley lived he served as a quasi bond of union. In compliance with his wishes, except in London and a few other places, Methodist services were not held in church hours, the congregations were exhorted to attend the parish church and the members to receive the sacraments at the hands of the parish clergyman. This anomalous state of things could not be indefinitely perpetuated. A large majority of the members desired to have their own services and sacraments, nor is this surprising, as a considerable portion of them were in no sense members of the Church of England and never had been; they were either of Nonconformist origin or else had been gathered out of the world. The Methodist Conference, mindful of the wishes of its founder, resisted the demands of the people as long as it could do so without occasioning a disruption, which as it would have brought no gain to the Church would have been fatal to Methodism. At length in 1795 the "Plan of Pacification" was adopted which provides that "the sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except the majority of the trustees of that chapel on the one hand, and the majority of the stewards and leaders belonging to that chapel (as the best qualified to give the sense of all the people) on the other hand, allow it. Nevertheless, in all cases, the consent of the Conference shall be obtained, before the Lord's Supper be administered." It was also provided that wherever "the Lord's Supper had been already peaceably administered, the administration of it

should be continued in future."* Various other regulations were made in reference to the burial of the dead, service in church hours, &c.

These changes, which must have come in due time, were precipitated by the action of Mr. Kilham, then a young man on the Whitby circuit, of only six years standing. His first circular, issued anonymously, a few weeks after Mr. Wesley's decease, was addressed to the Methodists in Newcastle-on-Tyne and posted at York. For information respecting his subsequent career,—his genius for reconstructing Methodism, his polemical writings, and his final expulsion, we must refer the reader to Dr. Smith's "History of Methodism." In York and its neighbourhood he had few sympathizers; as shown by the roll of membership during the period extending from 1791 to 1800, the work of God went steadily on, the societies increased, and Easingwold was made the head of a new circuit. But in 1800, two years after the death of Mr. Kilham, and the very year in which the Sunday School was closed in Peaseholme Green, we find a company of his followers meeting in Grape Lane chapel, and a loss of thirty members in the city. Two or three years after this the meetings were discontinued and the chapel was closed; from these facts the reader will draw his own conclusions.

The preservation of the Methodist Connexion at this critical period from utter disorganization and dissolution must be regarded as a singular proof of God's Providence over it; He had raised it up for a great and wise purpose, and He would not allow it to be destroyed; and even the circumstances which threatened its existence were overruled so as to contribute to its strength and development.

* Minutes of Conference, Vol. I, p. 322.

Mr. Wesley had failed to secure the union of Methodism with the Established Church, but the measures he adopted for the continuance of the work which had grown to such dimensions under his supervision were by God's blessing completely successful. By the execution of the "Deed-Poll" on the 28th of February, 1784, he defined the "Conference of the People called Methodists," regulated its action, and secured to it the right of appointing ministers to all the chapels under his control. This has more than once proved a sheet anchor in the day of storm and tempest, and preserved the body from disintegration.

Notwithstanding the liberty granted in 1795 by the "Plan of Pacification," the York Methodists were slow to move, twenty years elapsed before the administration of the sacraments was introduced, and nearly thirty before the principal chapel was opened in church hours. This was due partly to the conservative spirit of the leading members, but much more to the fact that York was favoured with the services of several godly clergymen who preached Christ and let the Methodists alone. Besides the Rev. William Richardson, the names of Overton, and Graham, are still fresh and fragrant in the memory of many Methodists. Respecting Mr. Overton who came to the city about 1790, the following particulars derived from a letter addressed by the Rev. Walter Sellon to Mr. Hall of Wing, in the county of Leicester, are interesting. "The young man that was with me at your house is ordained and preaches at York. He was appointed to attend five condemned malefactors at York Castle and preach the condemnation sermon. It pleased God so to bless His word that they were all five converted and went triumphing in Christ to the gallows. His

education has cost me a great deal of money, but I hope it is well bestowed. The people of Mr. Wesley's Society follow him to a church he has three miles out of York in great numbers. He is so caressed that I am in fear lest he should be puffed up. But God is able to keep him. I got him educated at Cambridge with a design of taking him for my curate, but some gentlemen who contributed to his education as well as I, thought his talents should not be buried in a country village so they got him to York."*

The year 1793 was remarkable for an extensive revival of religion in Yorkshire and some other districts. The York Circuit shared largely in the refreshing shower. In the city one hundred persons were added to the Society and more than three hundred in other parts of the circuit. Many of these continued steadfast in faith and became ornaments of the Christian profession. The preachers in charge were Francis Wrigley, William Percival and John Brettell, all earnest men and in labours more abundant. At this time Methodism found its way into Wharton Lodge, Bickerton Park, which has added more than one honoured name to the roll of Methodist preachers. Mr. Thomas Harrison, stationed in York, the year before, had preached there in a barn and as the result Mr. F. Wilson had commenced family devotion. After the Conference of 1793, Mrs. Wilson applied to Mr. Wrigley for regular service. He said: "We have only one night in twenty at liberty and how can we give that up?" She returned with a heavy heart; but a few weeks later received a letter informing her that Mr. Brettell would come and preach on November 5th. After service Mr.

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XLI, p. 53.

B. drew out a class-paper and proposed to take down the names of those who desired to flee from the wrath to come. Fifteen willingly enrolled themselves; Mr. Wilson was standing by the door watching when Mr. Brettell said to him: "Perhaps you will have no objection to join?" He was startled by the appeal but that he might not discourage others, consented and soon became an earnest seeker of salvation. The decision of that moment was ever after regarded by him as a matter of devout thankfulness.*

Another remarkable conversion occurred about the same time which illustrates the true spirit of Methodism and the power of Divine grace. John Swail, a druggist in York, occasionally attended Peaseholme Green chapel, but evinced no concern about Divine things. Being threatened with consumption he resigned his business to his partner, and also made a will in which he left him considerable property, ignoring altogether the claims of an aged and indigent father. Having thus settled his affairs he went to Bradford to obtain medical advice. Here he took lodgings at a public house for himself and a boon companion who played well on a violin, resolving to spend the remnant of his life as merrily as possible. His father hearing of his illness sought him out. The sight of his venerable parent pricked his conscience and so far revived his filial feelings, that he immediately set about the alteration of his will. A few days after, as he was riding out, supported by two attendants, Mrs. Pollard, a Methodist of Bierley, was struck with his emaciated appearance and learning that he was in a dying state was strongly affected with concern for his soul. The next day she visited him and was cordially welcomed. He

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. LXXI, p. 938.

said: "I have been wishing and praying that God would send some one to instruct me and lead me in the way of salvation." The good woman took him home to her own house, tenderly nursed him, ministered to his spiritual need and had the satisfaction of witnessing his triumphant end. "O what glory!" he cried, "the room is full of glory," and then fell asleep in Jesus.*

Mr. John Kershaw who succeeded Mr. Brettell in 1795, gives us a glimpse of the tone of spiritual feeling which existed a year or two later. He writes: "I was appointed to the York Circuit, a circumstance which I take time to notice because it was eventually an appointment from which I derived much advantage. My love to God had too frequently been like a bird upon the wing; it was desire in motion; here it became like a bird upon the nest. My soul was made to delight itself in the Lord and to find an abiding rest in God. My former fluctuating state of mind is to be ascribed in part to the influence of doubts entertained respecting the doctrine of Christian perfection. I did not cordially embrace it, yet was not willing to reject it. . . . When I came to York I found a few names who had not defiled their garments—a few who walked with Christ in white. Their solid, rational and rich experience of the things of God, their uniform, pious and exemplary conversation, their clear, unequivocal and satisfactory testimony concerning the Spirit's operation upon their hearts bore down all my prejudices and removed all my doubts. I saw that none of them militated in any degree against the great mystery of the Kingdom of God. . . . I found a particular blessing in communing with that people. Some oppor-

* Arminian Magazine, Vol. XVI, p. 191.

tunities of fellowship and conversation with Robert Spence were eminently useful to me; my heart became more simple, it was as a weaned child; my love to God more fixed and abiding; my confidence in Him more strong and unshaken. To be brief, I received the Kingdom of God in a sense and manner I had never done before. From that time my heart in general has had one wish.

'My every weak though good design,
O'errule, or change, as seems Thee meet;
Jesus, let all my work be Thine;
Thy work, O Lord, is all complete,
And pleasing in Thy Father's sight
Thou only hast done all things right.' "*

These cursory notes or rather characteristic episodes of a period of great spiritual blessing in the time of severe trial may be well summed up by a brief extract from a letter addressed by Richard Burdsall to his son, dated May, 1797, which we introduce the rather as it shows how true Christians who are intent upon the glory of the common Lord, occupy a loftier region than that of sect and party; they "are one in God and Christ." "The work of the Lord is greatly reviving on every hand in this circuit. Two ministers of the church have lately come to hear me and given me the right hand of fellowship. One of them preaches round about in the York circuit in houses or barns wherever he has a call. He has been summoned before his Grace the Archbishop of York, but withstood him like a sound-hearted Christian telling his lordship that not all the world would hinder him from preaching Jesus Christ; so he prosecutes his labours and the Lord opens the way. At the York District Meeting three or four of the preachers

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXV, p. 224.

received the assurance that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and several other persons were brought into the liberty of the children of God. At Wharton Lodge last Wednesday night when I had finished preaching, one in the congregation cried out for mercy. I was desired to pray again; Mr. Burnell, who had conveyed us in his carriage, also prayed, and so many more that I was at a loss to know how many. When we were about to conclude, another cried out so that we continued till about ten o'clock and then returned to York. I confess I have not heard such scriptural and effectual prayers in all the revival."

In 1795 Mr. James Peart came to settle in York. He had occupied a farm at Walshford, a township with Ribstone in the parish of Hunsingore, where the family had resided for several generations. But having become a Methodist and a local preacher, he became obnoxious to the clergyman, and was at length discharged by his landlord. With the assistance of Messrs. John Hall and Joseph Agar, he commenced business as a corn-dealer, and as God prospered him, devoted his services to the cause of Methodism in York. For a number of years he was a useful preacher and successful class-leader. The following characteristic letter addressed by Mr. Thomas Hanby, then on the Leeds circuit, to Mr. Joseph Entwistle at Colne, which refers to the fact of Mr. Peart's ejectment will be read with interest especially as it was written during the Kilhamite agitation.

"November 1st, 1794. My dear Brother.—You are happy on the peaceable mountains, we are at war in the valley; the spirit of opposition runs high among us. I think they mean if possible to make a division among us, as they are secretly canvassing among our leaders, &c. But we certainly prosper both in town and country.

Although many of our noisy converts have fallen off, yet more rational ones fill up their places. The Height, or Old Barn has sunk much, but the ruin remains; and poor George the collier still pursues his prey upon his knees going about in the prayer meetings. Bramham is become a Bethel. Mr. Thorn has joined fourteen. Clifford sings as in days of old near thirty. Thorp is swallowed up in Kilham's whirlpool, Ribstone outbraves ecclesiastical tyranny; honest James Peart has received a discharge and is to leave his farm because he prayed, &c. Rothwell is a fruitful vine by a well, whose branches run over the wall. Bramley fair, but fruitless; Hunslet like a rose, but prickles under her leaves. Woodhouse, briars and thorns among her stately oaks, and many of her immaculate ones have been in the mire, and swine-like they love it. Thorner is our pleasant place, &c. Ah! lack-a-day my paper is done but not the love of your affectionate,—Thomas Hanby."

In 1798, the amiable Joseph Entwistle, Senr., was appointed the superintendent of the York circuit. A few jottings from his diary supply a tolerable view of the state of the societies, as also of the toils, perils and anxieties of the Methodist preacher at the close of last century. He found the work in a satisfactory condition; "the prospect of success was very promising;" large numbers were "inclined to hear the word;" some were "stirred up to seek the Lord," and the members of the church were "growing in the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ," but the labour was excessive. He had to preach *every* night in the week and not uncommonly three times on the Sunday; this, added to the meeting of classes and bands; the holding of love-feasts and prayer-meetings with other minor engagements of an itinerant life ren-

dered the work sufficiently onerous. There was too, a good deal of travelling which the severity of the weather sometimes rendered dangerous. Once on his way from Cawood to Riccall, after crossing the ferry he found the river had overflowed some parts of the road and not being acquainted with the path he got into deep water and was compelled to pass over a brook which had overflown its bank. He says: "I saw there was no other way; I considered myself engaged in the Lord's work; therefore I went through without fear, and my horse swam with ease." Another time he "waded through deep snow" from Fenton to Tadcaster and "the language of his heart and tongue was, O Lord, I am willing to go to the neck in snow all the day long, if that were possible, or to endure any hardship if Thou wilt only give me the spirit of my station." Three weeks later he writes: "I had some difficulty in getting to Mr. Coulson's, though no danger. When I got there, the family were driven upstairs, and I had to wade almost to the knees to get to them. All the low rooms were about a foot deep in water. In the evening I went with nine other persons in a small boat to Ulleskelf. The water was so high that we passed over hedge and ditch without obstacle for three quarters of a mile at least; and might have gone many miles in the same way. It was a delightful evening; the sun had just set, and left a crimson tinge in the western sky. An agreeable breeze just waved the surface of the water; and my mind enjoyed unexpressible rest in God. Glory be to His name, I had a gracious season while preaching. The people had had no preaching for a month and were hungry."*

More painful to any honourable mind than such incon-

* Memoir, p. 204.

veniences as these is the apprehension of debt occasioned by straitened circumstances. Mr. Entwistle's family was large and the income on the York circuit but scanty. Though the price of provisions was greatly increased, there had been no corresponding improvement in the stipend of the preachers. "It will not excite surprise that under such circumstances the prospect of an increase of family should occasion Mr. E. considerable anxiety. Being much depressed one day he opened his mind to his intimate friend and *bandmate* Mr. Robert Spence, and told him he feared it would be impossible to keep out of debt. Mr. Spence had imagined that the preacher's wants were well supplied; he expressed his surprise and concern, and enquired into the precise amount of their income. On being informed, he burst into tears, said he knew his Christiana could not keep house with such a sum, and from that moment resolved not to rest until the preacher's board was raised; a measure which some time after he was enabled to effect."*

His biographer says: "After spending two years with great comfort, some success, and much personal spiritual profit among this pious, intelligent, and affectionate people, my father reluctantly took leave of York on Tuesday, August 19th, 1800."

* Memoir, p. 208.

CHAPTER XIII.

Passing Incidents. 1800—1804.

Among the noteworthy incidents about this time is the conversion of Miss Nodes, who subsequently became the wife of the Rev. Dr. Newton. She was the daughter of Captain Nodes, of the seventeenth infantry, and resided with her widowed mother at Skelton, near York. Being passionately fond of music, a skilful player on the piano, and an excellent singer, she commanded the admiration of the circle in which she moved, and attracted the attention of a young commissioned officer. At this critical period she was convinced of the importance of religion under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Mitchelson, a clergyman of the Established Church, became decidedly pious, and began to associate with the Methodists. Shortly after the officer paid her a visit and was much disappointed at the change which he perceived in her sentiments and manner. To dissipate what he regarded as melancholy he asked her to sing his favourite song, "Oh no, my love, no!" This she politely declined, but offered to sing one she had composed to the same air, and sang the following words:

"I'd glad bid adieu to the world's fleeting pleasure,
You pity my weakness, but ah! did you know
The sweets of religion,—that best hidden treasure,
Would you have me resign it? ah never! ah no!

You will scarcely believe, when I say I've received
What few do obtain, while sojourning below;
I know by experience in whom I've believed,
Shall I give up this treasure, ah never! ah no!

In the gay scenes of life I was happiness wooing,
But alas! in its stead I've encountered but woe;
I found I was only a phantom pursuing,
I never once found it; ah never! ah no!

But in the bright path which you call melancholy,
I've found such delight as the world cannot know;
I know very well you will laugh at my folly,
Do you think I'll resign it? ah never! ah no!

As the song proceeded the officer was much affected and at the close he wept and shed tears; but Miss N. had resolved not to relinquish what she had obtained, and their acquaintance terminated by mutual consent.

Her first interview with Robert Newton was at the house of Mr. Richard Burdsall, whither she often resorted for counsel and encouragement. During the session of the District Committee in May, 1800, Mr. B. entertained Messrs. Needham and Newton with some others to dinner, and sent Miss Nodes an invitation to join them. To this her mother, who was averse to Methodism, objected, but the next day called with her to apologize; just then the party were kneeling down to prayer, and they were consequently invited in. After prayer a hymn was sung by Mr. Newton and Miss Burdsall, who had a clear and melodious voice of considerable compass. Miss Nodes then remarked that at Skelton they had to live by begging, for they only had preaching occasionally; and if one of them would go over and give them a sermon, it would be a great charity. Mr. Newton immediately promised to accompany Mr. Burdsall the following day, and an acquaintance commenced which terminated in a life-long and happy union.

The formation of the Easingwold circuit in 1800 occasioned a loss to York of nearly three hundred members, but this was more than recouped in the course of five

years. The ministerial staff was also reduced to two, but the labours of Robert Johnson and John Furness during the year were so far successful that a third minister was appointed at the ensuing conference. With them were associated two supernumeraries, Thos. Warwick and the venerable Alex. Mather, both of whom were suffering from severe bodily affliction and incapacitated for further service. The former, after a few months residence in York, removed to Rotherham, where a few years later he finished his course with joy. The latter, after forty-three years laborious and useful service, during which he had twice supplied the York circuit, came hither to die. He was one of the fathers of the connexion; a man greatly beloved; a wise counsellor, an able and edifying preacher, a strict disciplinarian, and above all an eminently holy man. According to Mr. Pawson he was known as Wesley's "right hand man," and after the death of our founder the preachers regarded him as a father. For several years he had at intervals been the subject of painful affliction, but continued to prosecute the work in which he delighted until in the spring of 1800, while superintendent of the London circuit, he was completely laid aside; and from that time, till death brought a welcome release, he was almost a constant sufferer. At midsummer he came to reside with his son, Dr. Mather, then an eminent medical practitioner in York, who tended him with the utmost filial affection. As the end drew near two of the friends sat up with him every night and were witnesses of his unfaltering faith and exemplary patience. On Saturday night, August 16th, he said to his friend Robert Spence "That he was afraid some of his friends would think he did not experience the truths he had so long inculcated upon the

people, but, said he, 'tell all of them that my confidence in God is as firm as a rock, it has been tried to the uttermost but never shaken.'"* On Monday 18th, being in extreme agony he exclaimed, "I long to be gone, I long to be gone," then after pausing awhile, "I am happy in Jesus, but my sufferings are very great." Again, when suffering a paroxysm of pain, he cried out most affectingly "Why are Thy chariot-wheels so long in coming? Lord grant me patience," and then as though the prayer was answered he calmly said:

"To patient faith the prize is sure,
And all that to the end endure
The cross, shall wear the crown."

On Wednesday morning the 20th he slumbered a little, and when he awoke seemed surprised to find himself still in the body, saying: "Why did you call me back? I have been in paradise. As surely as I shall go there again I have been in heaven this morning." On Friday, 22nd, about two hours before his departure he was heard to say, "I now know that I have not sought Thee in vain,—I have not—I have not—I have not." and then, "That name above every other name for ever dear, it dispels all my fears. O proclaim, proclaim Jesus! Tell me, shall I be with Him this night?" On being answered, "Yes, there is no doubt of it," he cried "He that I have served for near fifty years will not forsake me now. Glory be to God and the Lamb for ever! Amen! Amen! Amen!" These were almost his last words. His voice failed, his lips moved as if in silent prayer, till falling into a sweet slumber he imperceptibly breathed his spirit into the arms of Jesus. His body was committed to the same grave, in St. Saviour's churchyard, in which were deposited the remains

* Miss Spence's letter.

of John Manners nearly forty years before and they rest together in *sure* and *certain* hope of the resurrection unto eternal life.

At this time Richard Burdsall preached every Friday evening in a large upper room situated in Coppergate. The room was on the fourth storey, and often so densely crowded as to excite just apprehension of a disaster. On Christmas Eve he dwelt on the words, "She brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Among his hearers was Sarah Bentley, housekeeper at the George Inn, in Coney Street. The words of the preacher were as the seed that fell into good ground and brought forth a hundredfold. Sarah, or Sally as she was generally called, was about thirty years of age. Her parents, though strictly moral, were destitute of any true knowledge of God; and she had grown up without any thought of religion. To use her own words, she "got a little schooling, learned to knit, sew, write and read," and that was all. From the early age of fifteen she was employed as housemaid chiefly in inns and places of public resort, and being of a gay and thoughtless disposition, freely indulged in the lighter follies of her situation. The showy dress, the mazy dance, and the merry song had their charms for a young and lively girl. Thus her childhood and youth passed in vanity, and adopting her own characteristic expression, it was a "mercy of mercies" she was not completely carried away by the evil influences around her. Two years before her conversion her parents, to whom she was strongly attached, died within seven weeks of each other. The death of her father was surrounded with a degree of gloomy uncertainty which excited great

anxiety for her mother. One day she enquired if the "Parson" could do her any good. The reply was "no, but your sister Ellen can"—meaning that she could pray with her. Still dissatisfied, Sarah asked her mother if she would like to see any one else. She said, "I should like to see Mr. J. Dawson, of York." Sarah replied, "you shall, mother," and instantly went to her brother Harry in the yard and asked for a horse, that she might go to York and obtain Mr. Dawson's services. He told her she should not have one; if the "Parson" would not do for his mother she should have nobody. Greatly troubled, but still resolved to alleviate as far as possible her mother's distress, she proceeded from Sutton-on-the-Forest to York, a distance of about eight miles, on foot. Filial piety strengthened her steps and shortened the way; nor did it fail of its ultimate reward. Mr. Dawson received her kindly and taking horse without delay passed her on her way home. He found Mrs. Bentley under deep conviction for sin and eager to receive instruction. Day by day did the faithful visitor continue to travel fourteen miles, to minister to his penitent charge until death rendered his visits no longer necessary.

After the death of her parents Sarah came to reside in York with a brother who kept the George Inn. Her painful bereavements awakened serious consideration, which by the reading of God's word deepened into conviction for sin until her distress became insupportable. To relieve what they regarded as unreasonable melancholy, her friends sought to occupy her attention with the pleasures of the world, and so far succeeded as to induce her to attend a ball, yet not without some inward misgiving. Not long had she joined the giddy dance, before the Spirit of God

powerfully reminded her of her secret vows. It was enough. She instantly left the room and her companions, and sought a place of retirement where she might weep and pour out her soul before God; resolving never to enter such a scene again if He only would pardon her sin and folly. Thus her trouble increased, and she went on sorrowing day by day. At length while praying for direction, it occurred to her mind she had heard her brother-in-law reprove the ostler for swearing, saying, "if Mr. Burdsall heard thee swear so, what would he say to thee?" The ostler returned, "if I had continued to hear Mr. Burdsall, I should not be the man I am." This circumstance induced her to go and hear Mr. B. and that same night while praying in her chamber she found the rest of soul she had so long sought. Her conversion was singularly decisive. Gifted with strong moral courage she began at once to warn and exhort all who came to the inn, whether gentle or simple, to flee from the wrath to come and few persons in private life have been more successful in winning souls. Her zeal and devotedness soon led to her appointment as a leader, an office which she discharged with uncommon fidelity for more than forty years.

Among other well known individuals added to the church about this period were John Hardy, (the father of the Rev. Robert Spence Hardy,) William Whitehead, Senr., John Lyth, Senr., John Sigsworth, William Wade, Robert Usher, Ann Agar, (mother of the Rev. Joseph Agar Beet,) and Rebecca Terry, all of whom obtained a good report by faith.

In 1803, William Coultas, who had recently been converted to God in Scarborough, came to reside in York, and was placed on the local preachers' plan by the Rev.

Joseph Sutcliffe, M.A., then superintendent of the York circuit. For some time he was impressed with the conviction that he ought to devote himself to the work of the ministry, but as none of the preachers said anything to him on the subject, he relinquished the idea and married a Miss Taylor of York. At length, in 1809, he had a severe attack of fever, and while communing with his own heart enquired, "What is the cause? Ought I to have offered myself for the West Indies?" In this difficulty he consulted the ministers—the Revs. James Macdonald and W. E. Millar. They advised him to leave the matter with God; but the former communicated with Dr. Coke, and the following Conference he was appointed to St. Nevis, in the West Indies. His friends, having regard to his enfeebled health, endeavoured to dissuade him from going abroad, but he replied, "No English circuit for me, I must first preach the Gospel of the grace of God to the blacks."

The following year, the Dowager Lady Cayley,* of Brompton Green, who had recently joined the Methodist society, paid a visit to Mr. Robert Spence, and found in her intercourse with the York friends much spiritual advantage. In a letter to the Rev. Joseph Meek referring to this visit she says: "I spent a fortnight at York very pleasantly, as well as profitably. I saw many serious and pious people who were all anxious to help me in the good way. Mr. Spence took me to all the band-meetings, which, joined to his instructions, left nothing undone that could be of the smallest help; and indeed, I think Mr. Spence is so truly a Christian, that his example was the best lesson of all. I felt deep contrition for the sin of

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. LIII. p. 1.

unbelief which I found to be the grand hindrance to my receiving the blessing of a clean heart. I saw the absolute necessity of being a partaker of the Divine nature; and the moment I believed, I was, as it were, filled with the fulness of God. All doubts and fears vanished in a moment; and for ever praised be His Holy name! I have ever since been more humbled in myself, but stronger in the Redeemer's strength and ready for everything that may come in my way. I find unspeakable joy and peace in believing; and pray that I may never lose this inestimable blessing." A passing notice of this excellent lady will not be unacceptable to the reader. She was the widow of Sir Thomas Cayley, Bart., and for twenty-five years a bright ornament of the Methodist society in the Scarborough circuit. Her conversion was remarkable, showing how faithful prayer is treasured up in heaven, and how it may be answered under the most unlikely conditions. About the year 1780, the preaching at Brompton was held in the house of Thomas and Frances Allin. Thomas died, and Frances was compelled to leave the village. When going away she kneeled down in the street, lifted up her hands, and devoutly prayed that the Lord would raise up one of the Cayley family to bring back the gospel to Brompton. Twenty-three years after, without any human intervention Lady Cayley was suddenly awakened in the midst of a scene of worldly vanity, and, as she fully believed, in answer to Frances Allin's prayer. She writes: "I was convinced of sin in an assembly room, where everything in an instant appeared madness and folly; and where the faultiness of my whole life was brought to my recollection. A strong desire to do better arose in my breast; but the way I knew not. I had read but little of the Bible; and

had concerned myself little about prayer except when I attended the services of the church. Had I cried out, 'What must I do to be saved?' none around me could have answered the enquiry. I resolved on an entire change of life, to read the Bible and pray." She now began to read all the books of divinity she could obtain, but the more she read the more she was perplexed. She met with nothing to still the tempest of her troubled breast, until a lady whom she saw, while on a visit to Ireland, recommended her to read Wesley's Sermons, "Sermons!" she replied, "I have read sermons till I am sick of them." She was however induced to try Mr. Wesley's; and before she had got through half of the first volume, she found what she so earnestly sought, the way of salvation through faith in Christ. From that time Wesley's sermons were her daily study, and, rather than be without such a treasure she said she would give any price for them. On her return home, she became a constant attendant at the little chapel of Snainton about two miles distant, and not unfrequently went to Ruston, an adjoining village, where the preaching was held in a cottage. Conceiving that she was wrong in sharing these religious privileges without acknowledgment, she made herself known to Mr. Needham, (whose ministry she greatly enjoyed,) and enquired how she could become a member of the Society. This difficulty was easily solved; she began to meet in class and received a ticket of admission at the next quarterly visitation. Shortly after, the owner of the cottage at Ruston, to which her ladyship trudged afoot on many a dark and weary night with one or two of her own servants, or a few poor women for her companions, threatened to burn it down if his tenants continued to receive the Methodists. The preaching was

consequently discontinued, but through the interposition of Lady Cayley and in fulfilment of Frances Allin's prayer it was more suitably provided for in Brompton. As long as health permitted, Lady Cayley was indefatigable in visiting the sick and poor of the village, even when her kindness was but little appreciated. One old man for whose spiritual welfare she was very anxious, used various means to discourage her visits. Once he locked the door; another time when he saw her coming he threw down a pail of water which nearly covered the floor. Perceiving his object her ladyship availed herself of a dry spot which had escaped the deluge, and from thence talked to him for some time on the danger of his state as a sinner in the sight of God. She then proposed to pray with him, but he objected that she could not kneel down, as the floor was wet. "Never mind," she said, "I can kneel upon a chair," which she did, and bade him good morning. Her life was beautiful, and not less beautiful her death. To her friends and servants who were weeping around she said, "Do not weep, rather rejoice that I shall so soon cease to suffer. You must not weep, try to sing. I wish I could sing. Praise the Lord! He will bless you all." She passed away exclaiming Glory! Glory! Glory! on the 30th of July, 1828, aged 79.

In 1803 and 1804, the labours of Mr. Sutcliffe and his colleagues were greatly blessed. Nearly fifty years after, that venerable minister wrote to a friend; "I remember York, which from the beginning was favoured with men and women distinguished with wisdom and piety, whose names to you need not be repeated. In particular, that in the course of two years the Society in the city augmented from three to four hundred." During the anxious period,

which had elapsed since Wesley's death, the membership had doubled, and the Peaseholme Green Chapel had become insufficient to accommodate the increasing congregation. A larger place of worship was urgently needed, and pending its erection the chapel in Grape Lane, now vacated by the followers of Mr. Kilham, was taken for two years at an annual rental of £20. Here supplemental services were held every Sabbath at 1-30 and 6 p.m., and Mr. Richard Burdsall preached every Friday evening.*

Many difficulties occurred in carrying into effect the wishes of the friends in reference to the building of a new chapel. The site selected belonged to two different proprietors; and worse still, a small angle was leased by an attorney who had failed in business. The solicitor in the bankruptcy and the surviving assignee, were decidedly opposed to Methodism, and the ground was occupied by a stable without right of way, its only access being through a house leased from the Corporation. There was no proceeding without this angle and the thought of building was therefore abandoned for the time. When such a thing was least expected, the solicitor, of his own accord, made an offer to sell the premises; the offer was immediately accepted, so that part of the difficulty vanished. The two proprietors came to terms; but there was still some doubt of the right of way. New Street, in which the proposed site lay, had been constructed through what was formerly Davy or Lardiner Hall, part of the possessions of David le Lardiner, which for several centuries enjoyed special privileges and immunities† by royal charter. Most of these

* Private letter.

† "The ancestors of David-le-Lardiner had really used the following liberties: To make the *larder* for the King. To keep the prisoners

were set aside in the thirty-eighth of Henry III., but certain exemptions from civil dues still remained. On this spot was a cluster of dwellings, where persons refusing to take up their freedom had established themselves; and it was a question, whether residing where they did, it could be demanded from them. The Corporation, to put down this retreat, made a purchase of the place and projected the "New Street" from Davygate to Coney Street. The right of way therefore was with them, and some very vexatious and unfair attempts were made to obstruct the erection of a Methodist chapel, and to render it inaccessible, when it should be completed, by procuring an order of the Corporation to that effect. A certain alderman is said to have vowed that the Methodists should not have the place so long as his name was ——. Strange to say, not long after he inherited some property on condition that he adopted the name of the previous owner. Ultimately all difficulty was overcome and the site secured, though not without taking forcible possession of some part of the premises.

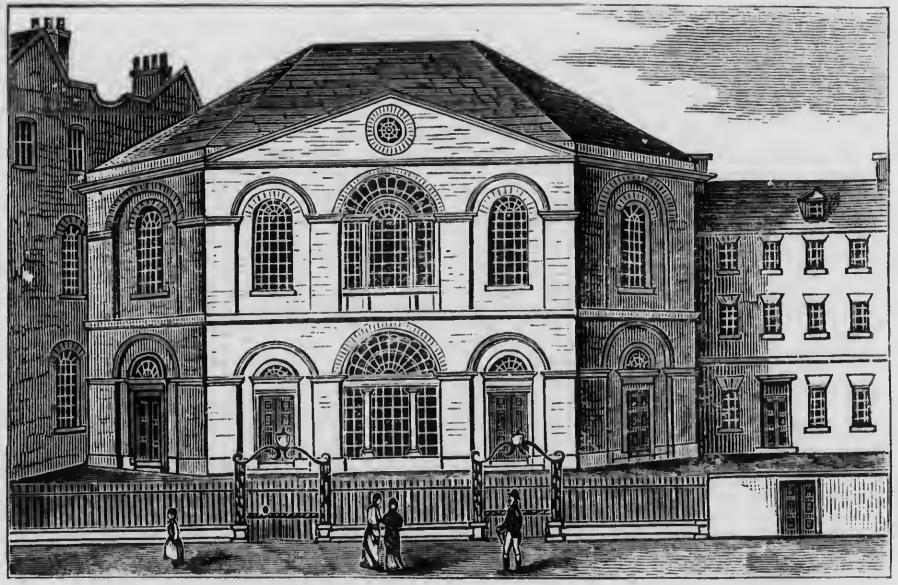
of the forest. To have the measure of the King for corn and to sell the King's corn. That they had *daily*, out of the King's purse five pence; and for these their ancestors had *charters*. Sometimes they used this liberty, to take every Saturday, from every window of the bakers where bread was set for sale, a loaf or an halfpenny—Of every brewer of ale, a gallon of ale or an halfpenny—Of every butcher's window, a penny worth of flesh or a penny—Of every cart-load of fish sold at Fossbridge; four penny worth of fish as they were bought at the sea side; and of every horse load of fish, a penny worth or a penny. That they used to make distresses of the King's debts and to take fourpence for every distress; and that they were *aldermen of the Minstrels*." Hargrove's History of York, Vol. II., p. 405.

CHAPTER XIV.

New Street Chapel. 1805—1809.

The foundation stone of New Street Chapel was laid, January 1st, 1805, at noon by the circuit stewards, Messrs. Joseph Agar and Thomas Gibson, supported by a number of the Trustees. The day proved fine; a vast crowd of people assembled on the ground to witness the ceremony, which was conducted with great solemnity. The Revs. Messrs. Bridgnell, Dall and Brown gave out hymns adapted to the occasion, and engaged in prayer; during which a remarkable unction from the Holy One rested upon the people, and many wept. Earnest supplications were made for the king, the magistrates, the nation, and for a blessing on the work in hand. "We could," says one who was present, "but regard it as a pledge of future good." Then followed an admirable discourse by the Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe, founded on 1 Sam. vii. 12, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," in which he reviewed the history, doctrine, and discipline of Methodism, and concluded thus: "Need we at this period, after reviewing the rise and progress of Methodism, ask whether the work be Divine? Would not enquiries of this kind be redundant as attempts to prove, that summer is come, when nature is clothed in gaiety and green? Has not its uniform character been to seek the conversion of sinners, to bring man into a nearer resemblance to his Maker, and to expand his heart with 'charity, which is the bond of perfectness?' Could two or three clergymen,

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NEW STREET CHAPEL IN 1805.

aided only by a few raw youths, despised by the rich, impeded by existing sects, persecuted by the mobs, and hated by their brethren, who ought to have been the first espousers of the revival; could they, I ask, have effected this extraordinary work without a Divine Commission? Was there ever a revival more pious in its origin, more disinterested in its design, or successful in its progress? If it was a Divine work to emancipate the Church from the tyranny of Rome, to substitute the Bible for legends, and to purge the temple of God from the worship of idols; could it be less Divine to adorn it with the graces of regeneration?" After an earnest exhortation to carry on the work for which their fathers had laboured and suffered, he adds: "May God, my brethren, bless the work of your hands. May the house this day begun, be the sanctuary of God to you and your families. May the cloud of His Divine presence rest on the assembly, purifying their hearts by faith. May your incense of prayer and praise burn with acceptance on His altar; and the blessings of His covenant be yours to all generations. Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen!"

The building, as designed by Mr. Rawstone, an architect resident in York, was of brick with stone mouldings and presented a neat appearance. The front is octangular terminating in the centre with a pediment. The interior nearly forms a square with the front corners cut off, and is well constructed for seeing and hearing. Its dimensions are 66 feet by 54 and 33 feet in height. Originally it was computed to accommodate 1500 to 2000* persons, and

* The *York Chronicle*, dated Thursday, October 17th, 1805, says: "The inside is so commodiously arranged as to admit *more than* 2000 persons."

possibly this number may have been crowded within its walls; but modern Methodists require more elbow-room, and the present estimate is that it will comfortably seat about 1000. Since its erection in 1805, the chapel has undergone several important changes; more than once the body has been re-pewed; a portico has been added in front and an organ-loft behind; while the interior has been tastefully decorated, so that now a more comfortable, old-fashioned place of worship it will be difficult to find. Attached to the premises, besides vestries and a spacious band and school-room, there are two houses fronting New Street and a chapel-keeper's house behind. About 1841-2 the "old Judges' Lodgings," a large house which abutted at the back, was purchased by the trustees to protect the lights of the chapel. It was used for a few years as a ministers' house, but has long been let off as offices. While the chapel was building, Mr. Agar so frequently left his place of business to look after the workmen, that his good wife suggested he had better put up his shutters with a notice outside, "this business will be resumed when New Street Chapel is opened."

The erection of a building so large and commodious was at the time a great undertaking, for the York Society barely numbered 400 members, few of whom could make any pretensions to wealth. But our fathers were men of faith and "strengthened their hands to the good work." The first outlay on the premises amounted to a little over £4000, towards which the York circuit contributed £2206, and the collections made by the direction of the Conference in adjoining districts or circuits realised £713, leaving a debt of £1100. The subscription list contains the following sums of £20 and upwards:

	£				£	
Mr. Joseph Agar	100			Mr. J. Hawkins	50	
Mr. Peter Bielby	100			Mr. J. Peart	50	
Rev. W. Blagbourne	100			Mr. Thomas Gibson	30	
Mr. Burnell	100			Mr. Botterill	25	
Mr. George Fettes	100			Mr. Cooper	21	
Mr. Robert Spence	100			Mrs. Croft	21	
Messrs. Russel & Bourne	113			Mr. Stabler	21	
Mr. Cordukes	50			Mr. W. Smith	20	

The sums obtained from other Districts, &c., were:

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Newcastle & Whitby Districts	217	19	3	Pocklington Circuit	25	5	10
Leeds Circuit	114	0	4	Wetherby	23	15	2
Hull	109	2	6	Pontefract	23	13	0
Halifax	55	15	9	Otley	22	5	6
Birstal and Dewsbury	36	0	6	Scarborough	18	10	0
Howden	35	0	0	Malton	17	10	0
				Easingwold	15	0	0

This extraneous aid was afforded on the principle of "equality" inculcated by St. Paul, 2 Cor. viii, 14., for in the preceding year York had made collections for chapels in Todmorden and Beverley. Subsequent improvements and the purchase of adjoining property have brought up the cost of New Street Chapel to £6600. It may seem strange that while newer and more costly chapels have been built and paid for, there still remains on New Street Chapel a debt of £2000. This has arisen from some peculiarities in the deed, and the purchase of additional property but it is hoped the debt will soon be extinguished.

The following list of the original trustees will specially interest York Methodists: Joseph Agar, currier; Thomas Gibson, whitesmith; William Blagbourne, gent., Fulford; Robert Spence, bookseller; Robert Wilkinson, cheesemonger; Henry Bourne, gent.; George Fettes, pawnbroker; Martin Burnell, coachbuilder; James Peart, cornfactor; Thomas Cordukes, linendraper; John Hawkins, butterfactor; John Cobb, bricklayer; Barnard Clarkson, gent.,

Foggathorpe; Richard Taylor, gent., Ryther; Joseph Holmes, gent., Ryther; William Allen, gent., Church Fenton; Francis Wilson, farmer, Wharton Lodge; William Wilson, gent., Sinnithwaite; Edward Rayson, gent., Wighill; Mathias Skilbeck, gent., Healough; Anthony Jackson, gent., Askham Bryan; Thomas Routh, farmer, Riccall; Thomas Shipton, tanner, Selby; Wm. Cleathing, merchant, New Malton; Michael Coulson, farmer, Hazlewood.

The deed of trust was executed on the 4th of June, 1805, and the chapel opened on Sunday, October 13th, when an appropriate sermon was preached by the Rev. John Pawson, from Isaiah lxii. 11. "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh." In the evening, the Rev. Joseph Taylor, who had succeeded Mr. Sutcliffe as superintendent of the circuit, discoursed on Genesis xxviii. v. 17. "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." The services were singularly successful and the proceeds amounted to £90 16s. 9d. Numerous copies of the following verses were distributed among the people.

TO BE SUNG

AT THE OPENING

OF THE

METHODIST CHAPEL,

NEW STREET, YORK.

CHORUS.

And will the great eternal God,
On earth establish His abode?
And will He from His heavenly throne
Avow our temples for His own?

TRIO.

We bring the tribute of our praise,
And sing that condescending grace,
Which to our notes will lend an ear,
And call us sinful mortals near.

SOLO.

These walls we to Thine honour raise;
Long may they echo with Thy praise;
And Thou descending fill the place
With choicest tokens of Thy grace.

DUETTO.

Here let the great Redeemer reign,
With all the graces of His train;
While power divine His word attends,
To conquer foes and cheer His friends.

CHORUS.

And in the great decisive day,
When God the nations shall survey,
May it before the world appear,
That crowds were born for glory here.

W. BLANCHARD, PRINTER, YORK.

If any doubts were entertained respecting the propriety of rearing so large an edifice they were soon dissipated. Many persons, who were thought very unlikely to enter a Methodist chapel, applied for sittings; and among them Mrs. W——, a lady whose husband was very angry that the Methodists had pitched their tent so near his dwelling and had even said, he "had rather the devil had come there than the Methodists."* The congregation increased rapidly, and in the course of six months, the chapel was well filled. Three services were held on the Sabbath, at 8 a.m., 1-30 and 6 p.m.; also two during the week. The progress of the work was thenceforward steady and considerable. Year after year passed away and each had its spiritual seed time and harvest. The trustees however,

* Letter under date.

were soon involved in a long and trying litigation in consequence of a charge made by the city authorities for poor-rates. Against this the steward, Mr. Joseph Agar, appealed to the local magistrates, who decided in favour of the rate. Not satisfied with the decision, he carried the case into the Court of King's Bench, where it was lost, so far as New Street was concerned, as some portion of the trust-income had been applied to circuit purposes. The case however under the title of the "King and Agar" became a standing precedent determining the conditions under which chapels were liable to rates, until in 1833 the law assumed its present shape.* The cost of these proceedings was over £400, which was ultimately paid out of the Connexional funds.

Amid these troubles there were gratifying signs of spiritual prosperity. A private letter dated June 11th, 1806, speaks of "the drops in anticipation of the shower," "lively prayer meetings particularly at Mr. Burnell's, on Wednesday nights," "members increasing in number," "believers built up in their most holy faith," "others passing to heaven," "among others William Fowler," Mr. Burdsall's classes "get filled and run over." Peaseholme Green Chapel had been sold for £530 and the proceeds devoted to the cost of the new chapel. Such was the York Methodist news of the day.

No longer a "feeble folk," the York Methodists began to make their influence felt in public matters. Mr. Wilberforce, who had been returned as member for the County of York for more than twenty years without opposition, was threatened with a contested election; and there seemed a probability that the great advocate of

* 3rd and 4th William IV, Cap., 30.

negro-emancipation would lose his seat. Under these circumstances the following circular was widely distributed in the Yorkshire circuits.

York, October 20th, 1806.

"Dear Sir,

As a Canvass has already begun for this County, on the Event of a General Election, we think it right immediately to inform you, that we feel it our Duty unitedly to come forward in Support of our present Member, Mr. Wilberforce, who has on all Occasions distinguished himself as the real Friend of Religion, and whose Political Sentiments and unwearied Exertions to procure an Abolition of the Slave-Trade, have endeared him to us, and our Society at large, we doubt not that your Views on the Subject, and those of our Friends in your Circuit, will coincide with ours; If so, it would be well to recommend to the Friends of Mr. Wilberforce to exert themselves in his favour without delay, as the Supporters of the other Candidates are using their utmost Efforts.—We think it proper to acquaint you, that the Canvass made here, by the Friends of Mr. Wilberforce, is made in his own particular Interest, distinct from that of the other Candidates.

We remain, Dear Sir, Your's most affectionately,

William Blagbourne,	William Lyth,
Robert Spence,	John Cobb,
Richard Burdsall,	Robert Wilkinson,
Henry Bourne,	Joseph Shepherd,
William Smith,	Thomas Cordukes,
Joseph Agar,	John Thornley."
Thomas Gibson,	

The election took place the following May, when Mr.

Wilberforce, the Hon. Henry Lascelles, and Lord Milton entered the field. The contest was severe, lasting fourteen days, and costing it is said upwards of two hundred thousand pounds. A few days before the poll, a second circular was issued, to which were also appended the names of the three circuit ministers, Messrs. Joseph Taylor, Joseph Drake, and Daniel Isaac, earnestly pressing the necessity of exertion and soliciting subscriptions; and as Mr. Wilberforce's prospects of success were doubtful this was followed by a third in the midst of the contest, still more urgent, containing a list of promised contributions, in which we find the names of William Blagbourne, Joseph Agar, Ed. Wade, Robert Spence, William Warner, Jun., and Martin Burnell, each for £25. The issue was that Mr. Wilberforce was returned at the head of the poll, and Lord Milton defeated Mr. Lascelles by a majority of less than 200.

"Sammy Hick, whom James Everett has immortalized as the Village Blacksmith, took advantage of this election to forward his memorable letter* to King George. It was put into Mr. Wilberforce's hands, but whether it ever reached its destination or no is not known. The following conversation on the subject is attested by the late Mr. Baggett of Kippax. *Mr. B.* 'Well Sammy, they say you have been writing a letter to the King offering to lend him some money, is it true?' *Sammy.* 'Yes.' *Mr. B.* 'Did you get any answer?' *Sammy.* 'No.' *Mr. B.* 'How was it?' *Sammy.* 'Why, you see I writ the letter mysen, and ye knaw, I war'nt satisfied aboot it, sea I got a young man i'd village to copy 't for ma; and I then went to York, and put it into Mr. Wilberfoss' hand to get

* The Village Blacksmith, p. 153.

it to't King." *Mr. B.* 'It's strange you got no reply.' *Sammy.* 'Well ye see I forgot to put my name to't.' *Mr. B.* 'What a pity!' *Sammy.* 'It was happen as well, for if he'd gotten it, he'd mebbee made a bishop o' me and ruined my soul.' "

York was now favoured with an excellent ministerial staff. Joseph Taylor, the superintendent, was an instructive preacher, "his discourses though not brilliant contained a rich variety of matter, well arranged, expressed in a neat and pure style, and delivered with a gentle and persuasive manner." Joseph Drake is described as a deeply pious man and an acceptable preacher; whilst Daniel Isaac was "a man greatly beloved," who, with sterling goodness and keen powers of intellect, combined much sarcastic humour, a dangerous gift, which was however compensated by his sociality and sincerity. York became endeared to him by many pleasant associations, and his subsequent appointments to the circuit show that the attachment was reciprocated. Good old Richard Burdsall made a practice of praying for him as long as he lived. His ministry was highly appreciated and often attended with marked results. Preaching one Sunday at Newstreet from "Search the Scriptures" he remarked, "If any one here pleads ignorance for want of a Bible, and will come to me, as I have two, I will give him one; and if more apply, I do not doubt that a few friends will give their mite to purchase more." Next morning some one went for the promised Bible, and by the first post he received an anonymous letter enclosing £5 for the purchase of more.* During the latter part of his stay in York Mr. Isaac married Miss Patrick, a lady who richly merited the good word of all who had

* Private letter.

the happiness of her acquaintance. She proved a true helpmeet, and long survived his death, attaining the advanced age of ninety-nine. Her end was singularly peaceful, and it is recorded that her face shone with a remarkable halo for a quarter of an hour after her decease.

An extract from a letter addressed by Daniel Isaac to Mr. Burdekin, dated April 4th, 1807, acquaints us with the state of the society in York at this time, and the secret workings of his own heart. He writes: "We had a lovefeast here last Lord's day; and a most blessed time it was. We had a rich variety of genuine Christian experience. The young men spoke freely and sensibly. Some fathers and mothers told us of their conflicts and conquests, and shewed us the spoils they had taken. My feelings were various. At one time I was almost overwhelmed with Divine love; at another, I was covered with shame. How could I help loving Him, who has done so much for me? How could I be otherwise than happy in the society of His saints? And yet how could I avoid feeling shame when I scarcely heard a single experience which was not far superior to my own? The good work goes on gradually, though but slowly, at York. Several of the young men profess, and I believe enjoy, entire sanctification. We have one or more added to the society nearly every week. The societies in the villages remain dull, yet I think they improve a little. . . . I have good ground to conclude that I make some progress in the Divine life; but I move *very slowly*."

The high tone of religious feeling, which had for many years distinguished the York society, and which continued for some years after this period, was due by God's blessing in a great measure to a succession of faithful ministers,

who insisted strongly on the necessity of entire sanctification, both in the pulpit and the social circle. Mrs. Pawson writing to Mrs. Spence observes: "In a conversation with Brother Taylor, I reminded him of our social interviews, when he was first stationed in York;—how spiritual the conversation was—what pains he took to turn it to subjects that relate to the deep things of God. Before tea he always went to prayer. Mrs. Fettes, who was just come from Hull, was a second Miss Ritchie. I remember telling Jenny Wilson how much I was struck and benefitted by her. She answered: 'Had you been as faithful to the grace of God as she has been you might have been like her.' This reproof led me to pray much that this might be accomplished in me. My mind is often affected when I view the rising generation. Many of them rest much upon the surface of religion. They press not after the depths of holiness. There needs a greater giving up of what they call little things; possibly there is a want of more faithfulness amongst the leaders and religious friends. I found them remarkably plain and decisive in their instructions to me. They would admit of no palliation. Brother Bramwell, in a letter lately received, expresses his fear lest sanctification should not be sufficiently preached among us. You are highly favoured by having Brother Pipe, who will, I make no doubt, enforce this blessed doctrine and be very useful among you."

Mrs. Pawson was now a widow, having lost her husband about eighteen months. This venerable minister died at Wakefield, March 19th, 1806; finishing a long and useful career with triumphant joy. "Doubts," he exclaimed, "gloomy doubts, where are they? I have none; where are they gone?" And again, "I have neither pain, sickness,

sorrow, nor a wish to live or die. All is well." It was his desire that his widow should reside in Leeds or York; and if a suitable house could have been secured near the chapel she would have returned to her native city. She settled in Leeds, and only survived her husband three years. Mr. Pawson bequeathed the sum of £40 to the Newstreet trust.

At the Conference of 1808, William Carlton, then a local preacher on the York circuit, was accepted as a candidate for the ministry. He was born at Sutton-on-the-Forest; when about fifteen years old he became the subject of religious impressions and attended the chapel in Peaseholme Green. His earnest and devout demeanour attracted attention, and he was invited to join Mr. Burdsall's class. The invitation was welcomed and for many Sundays he walked from Sutton to York, a distance of eight miles, in time to meet his leader at eight in the morning. On one of these visits the burden of his sins pressed heavily upon him; and while returning home alone, he knelt down by the way-side and wrestled with God in prayer, until he was filled with "joy and peace in believing." For fifty years he laboured successfully as a minister of Jesus Christ, and was faithful to the end.

The ministers stationed in York by this Conference were Jonathan Crowther, John Pipe and A. E. Farrar. The last was wont to regard the appointment as exercising a lasting influence on his character. "The society at York," he says, "at that time contained a collection of individuals of singular intelligence and piety." The second year Mr. F. resided with his colleague Mr. E. W. Miller, who dwelt in the light of God's presence and favour continually. The one religious idea which pervaded the

York society through his agency, and that of the pious laymen referred to, was the possibility and importance of obtaining the blessing of entire holiness.* "The predominant aim of Mr. Miller was always to '*live to God.*' He professed a state of entire sanctification; and appeared eminently to '*walk in the Spirit.*' He left this impression everywhere. Of the world he cared to know nothing. He was decidedly a spiritual man. His conversation, not often continuous, was directed to lead the heart to God; and frequently—almost every day—he would suddenly call his family to their knees; and seldom did he thus take us into the Divine presence but we felt as though bending beneath the cloud overshadowing the mercy-seat."†

It is not surprising that, with such men in the pulpit, the work of God steadily progressed. "Many were made free from the guilt, and many from the power of inward sin."‡ The conversion of Joseph, afterwards the Rev. Jos. Agar, which took place at this time, may be particularly related. He was on the point of going to London, without any serious concern for his soul. His case was strongly impressed on the mind and heart of Sally Bentley, and became the subject of her fervent prayers. To these, as opportunity occurred, she added suitable admonitions, but with little apparent result. At length she desired him to meet her at the throne of grace for the purpose of mutual intercession. He replied: "I must first learn to pray for myself." Some time after, she found on enquiry that he had not altogether forgotten her kind request, and was encouraged to pray still more earnestly on his behalf.

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. LXXVI, p. 313.

† Dixon's Memoir of Rev. Ed. William Miller, p. 122.

‡ Private letter.

Such indeed was her confidence that her petitions would be answered, that she told his mother who was busily preparing for his intended removal, she need not provide for his going to London, as she believed the Lord intended to make him a preacher. Much as she desired it, his mother saw but little prospect of so decided a change; yet not long after, his parents were disturbed in the night by a strange noise as of some one in distress. Mr. Agar arose and found his son earnestly pleading with God for the forgiveness of sins. The work of grace thus remarkably commenced, was shortly after completed on a visit to Miss Bentley's, where Messrs. A. E. Farrar, Arnett and Watson, had met to take tea. The social party was "sanctified by prayer," and crowned with the Saviour's presence. The power of faith was imparted to the sorrowing sinner, and that same evening at the band-meeting he "made confession unto salvation." Eventually Miss Bentley's prediction was fully verified. Two years intervened and Mr. Agar was set apart to the Christian ministry.

Miss Bentley was now a leader, and the fame of her zeal reached beyond her own immediate sphere. Once she was sent for by the Countess of —— who was visiting at Lady Johnstone's, and wished to converse with her on the subject of a change of heart and its attainment. The interview, which lasted about five hours and terminated only with the "noon of night," was honoured with God's blessing. Her ladyship obtained that which her soul desired—"a new name and a new nature," and they parted in the hope of meeting again at the right hand of God.*

Ann Holmes, afterwards wife of Mr. George Preston, a local preacher in Hull, was awakened under Mr. Miller,

* Lyth's Memoirs of Sarah Bentley, p. 53.

but did not seek the Lord with her whole heart, till visited by a severe affliction, when she found the need of that religious support which she had neglected to secure whilst in health.* Mrs. Lyth, the daughter of Richard Burdsall, who had been converted at an early age now received the baptism of the Spirit, which for fifty years she exemplified by a blameless life. Her conscience was

> Quick, as the apple of an eye,
> The slightest touch of sin to feel.

As an instance of her conscientiousness we mention a circumstance which occurred at this time. A farmer, who owed a considerable sum of money, which had been written off as a bad debt, called unexpectedly one Sabbath morning to settle the account. She said: "We do not receive money on a Sunday, it is the Lord's day, and we do not think it right." "Well," replied the man, holding the money in his hand, "You might as well take it, while you have the chance of it." But neither argument nor expostulation could induce her to touch the forbidden notes. The man therefore pocketed the money and went away; but not without a faithful admonition to keep holy the Sabbath day. No one eventually loses anything by the maintenance of principle, and the debt was honestly discharged the following week.†

Mrs. Lyth writes to her brother the Rev. J. Burdsall. "Our preachers are well chosen. Mr. Miller rouses, while Mr. Farrar informs, and Mr. Mc Donald solves doubts and clears away difficulties. Mr. Miller is a precious man; the Lord blesses him among us. Several fresh classes have been formed. Three leaders have been taken out of father's class."

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. L, p. 715.

† Memoirs, p. 39.

CHAPTER XV.

Christian Work. 1810—1817.

The "York Benevolent Society" was established by the followers of Wesley in 1792, and was at first largely supported by members of various churches. It still continues its work of love and mercy, without respect of sect or party, though its support, (as its management was from the beginning,) is now left almost entirely to the Wesleyan Methodists. Mr. Spence was appointed the first Treasurer, who held the office for upwards of thirty years, and was succeeded by Mr. Isaac Taylor. One circumstance connected with this Society deserves mention. For a number of years a person, signing herself "Leonora," sent a donation of £5 for the funds of the institution. As the letters bore a different post-mark almost every time the name of the giver was never discovered. A few years before Mr. Spence's death the contribution was discontinued and it was concluded that the generous donor was no more.* Among other liberal subscribers was Lindley Murray, the grammarian, who to the close of his life contributed four guineas annually.† The report of the present treasurer, Mr. J. F. Taylor, shows that in 1883 there were dispensed 2800 bread tickets, and 1792 coal tickets at a cost of £139.

In 1810, after ten years of inaction, the Sunday School was revived under more favourable auspices. A committee was formed, consisting of Messrs. John Taylor,

* Memoir of R. Spence, p. 107. † Ibid, 108.

T. Stodhart, W. Gowland, W. Agar, Isaac Taylor, E. Branton, J. Lyth, G. Burdon, R. Bussey, M. Abbey, and John Fawcett, and the school re-commenced in Jubbergate, where 16 teachers and 80 scholars were soon gathered together. Writing was excluded. From this time the number of scholars rapidly increased and it was found necessary to secure additional accommodation. The girls were therefore removed to a room in College Street, until in 1883 a more commodious place was taken for the accommodation of the whole school in Goodramgate, on the premises of Mr. James Meek, who had just commenced business. This, however, in the course of three years was found inadequate, and was supplemented by renting the old meeting-room in Pump Yard for one year, when a second school was opened in connexion with the chapel erected in Skeldergate, at the corner of Albion Street. In June, 1820, the Goodramgate school was transferred to a larger room in St. Andrewgate; but this became overcrowded in the following year, and a portion of the children were assembled in New Street Chapel vestry and on the landings of the gallery stairs. The several places were, however ill-adapted to accommodate the number of children in actual attendance; and in the month of August, 1821, a plot of ground lying between Fossgate and Hungate was purchased for the erection of suitable premises, which were built at a cost of £1000, and opened on the 1st of January, 1822, under the designation of the Wesley Place schools. The scholars now numbered nearly 600.

An elaborate system of rules, reaching the number of *eighty-two* and minutely regulating the conduct of the officers, teachers, and scholars, prepared at the request of the committee by Messrs. J. W. Brewis and George

Clarkson, contributed much to the efficiency of the schools. Though now deemed needlessly precise it is certain that the admirable order secured while they were in force has never been surpassed. During the first twenty years, besides many who were savingly converted to God, and became useful and active members of the Church, these schools sent forth four missionaries, two itinerant and fourteen local preachers; one missionary's wife, and four ministers' wives.

It would be pleasant to record here, if space would admit, the names of all who at this early period engaged in Sabbath school work; but we may mention in connexion with Wesley Place, Thomas Stodhart, the musical composer; Thomas Hodgson, a descendant of the good woman who saved John Nelson from being put into the well at Acomb; James Meek, thrice Lord Mayor, and John Jackson: also at Albion Street, William Gowland, George Burdon and John Lyth. George Hudson, afterwards distinguished as the "Railway King," was one of the secretaries. Among the "elect ladies" whose memory is still pleasant were Sarah Bentley, Grace Whitley, Ann Masterman, and Mary Ward.

The re-opening of the Sabbath School appears to have had a stimulating influence upon the work of God, for the roll of membership exhibits in 1810-11 an increase of eight classes and one hundred and twenty members within the limits of the city. Among the new leaders appointed were Mary Cooper, whose husband was afterwards Lord Mayor, Isaac Taylor, George Burdon, William Smith, Joseph Brooks, and John Fawcett; of these the two last were singularly successful in gathering souls, for

in three years each had collected over seventy members and was under the necessity of dividing his class.

At the Conference of 1811, Dr. Taft was appointed to York, and remained two years. "This period," says his biographer,* "was one of continued labour and usefulness, both in his medical and ministerial capacity." His first impressions of the circuit were by no means favourable, for writing to a friend he says, "I begin to like York and the York people a great deal better than I did, but I never shall like the circuit, and most heartily wish to remove next year unless it is divided. You will be pleased to hear we have a good work begun in the city. Several have been awakened and set at liberty within the last few weeks, and I can truly say, I never felt my soul more alive to God; but the country part of the circuit in general is very low." The doctor's constitution, which was not of the strongest, was ill adapted to the toil of a wide country circuit, and his residence in York was embittered by the death of his father which took place under his own roof and was occasioned by the fracture of his leg. The limb mortified, and the aged man suffered great pain in the course of his affliction, but when recollected expressed an unshaken confidence in Christ. Dr. Taft took his body to Sandiacre, near Nottingham and laid it in the grave by the side of his wife's. Several of the old Methodists from the surrounding villages who attended the funeral attributed their salvation under God to his labours, and looked upon him as the spiritual father of the neighbouring societies.†

The Rev. John Reynolds, senr., Dr. Taft's superin-

* Dr. McAllum, his son-in-law.

† Memoir.

tendent, besides being a good preacher was a diligent pastor and a strict disciplinarian. As a proof of this, Mrs. Lyth writes to her brother John Burdsall, in October, 1811: "Our preachers are labouring to reform us in respect of discipline. They are going to be very strict, as in this circuit many serious men have married irreligious women, and serious women have married irreligious men, and still remained in our societies. I believe many will be excluded, as this is a growing evil. We have not much increase since Conference, yet a few are added. Our congregations are large, and the chapel so crowded on Sunday evenings, that it is not able to contain the multitude that wish to hear the Gospel. Three young men have been sent out to travel. Father preaches two or three times almost every Sunday with as much spirit and zeal as a young lad." The three young men referred to were John Scott,* who was elected President of the Conference in 1843 and 1852; William Ash and William Arnett. A few months later she writes: "God is with us and revives His work." It is presumable that the exercise of discipline was beneficial. Again; "Mr. Agar is chosen Sheriff." "Esther Chapel and Anna Whitfield, two of the oldest leaders, have both died well."

On the 26th of January, 1813, the first annual meeting of the York Auxiliary Bible Society was held in the Concert Room, under the presidency of the Hon. Lawrence Dundas, M.P. On this occasion Methodism was represented by Dr. Taft, the Established Church by Rev. Messrs. W. Richardson, Overton and Graham, the Congregationalists by Rev. Mr. Wemyss, the Society of Friends by Mr. Tuke, and the old Presbyterians by the Rev. C. Wellbeloved. In

* See chapter on Village Methodism, under Copmanthorpe.

the Report it is stated: "Your committee have deemed it an important and necessary branch of their trust, to institute an accurate enquiry into the number of families wanting Bibles, in the city and suburbs. They report with some satisfaction, that from an annual distribution of Bibles made in this place for many years, the want is found to be comparatively small. The number of families having no Bibles at all, or very imperfect copies, amounts to 701. As a partial supply, in cases the most urgent and necessitous, your committee have this year effected a distribution, for the most part gratuitous, of 176 Bibles and 26 Testaments." The receipts for the year 1812 showed a total of £1707, of which York contributed £1397, Malton £170, and Easingwold £140. This was a noble beginning which the present supporters of the society might profitably ponder.

The year following witnessed the formation of the York branch of the Wesleyan Methodist Foreign Missionary Society. Long before this, Methodism had established missions in Ireland, America, the West Indies, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, which reported about fifty missionaries and 17,000 members; but these had been promoted and sustained chiefly by the indefatigable efforts of Dr. Coke; who not only gave largely of his own substance, and begged from town to town and from door to door for their support; but himself crossed the Atlantic eighteen times in the prosecution of his beneficent design. What he had done for the West it was in his heart to attempt for the East, and though verging on three-score years and ten, he proposed to conduct a company of missionaries to establish centres of operation on the continent of India and in Ceylon. While these thoughts were uppermost, he paid his last visit to York, accompanied by

his amiable wife, and was entertained by Mr. Robert Spence. While collecting subscriptions for his contemplated work, he obtained an introduction to Lindley Murray by the courtesy of Captain George Smith. On reaching the residence of this distinguished man, they were first ushered into the presence of Mrs. Murray, who when informed of the object of their visit said, "that her husband was unwell and therefore not much disposed to see strangers; but that she would tell him that Thomas Coke had called." Lindley Murray received him with great kindness, listened to his appeal, entered into the case of India and the proposed mission, and then presented the Doctor with a £10 note. It was more than he expected, for such donations were but few and the reception of it gladdened his benevolent heart.*

His visit to York terminated very painfully. Smitten with sudden and fatal illness his wife, to whom he had been married little more than a year, lingered but a fortnight, and then expired in hope of a better re-union. Her remains were conveyed to Brecon to be interred in the family vault; Dr. Taft and Mr. Spence accompanying the bereaved husband on this mournful errand.†

At the ensuing Conference Dr. Coke propounded his daring scheme for evangelizing India, and asked for a dozen Missionaries to accompany him. It was met with strong opposition, not in the spirit of faction, but on the ground of the large expenditure which would be incurred, and which there seemed no probability of meeting. The Doctor left the Conference in tears and spent the night in prayer. The next day, when the subject was resumed, he

* Memoirs of Capt. George and Mrs. Smith, p. 56.

† Memoir of R. Spence, note, p. 162.

made a most thrilling and energetic appeal, and presented himself and six other preachers, who were willing to encounter all the difficulties of the enterprise, generously adding that if the Connexion could not bear the expense of the undertaking, he was ready, out of his own private fortune to defray the cost of the outfit to the extent of £6000. Overcome by his intense earnestness and self-sacrificing generosity his brethren yielded to his request, and it was at once resolved that the mission should be forthwith established.*

Dr. Coke's departure for the East, and his lamented death while crossing the Indian Ocean, necessitated the adoption of measures calculated to secure an increased and permanent missionary income. Leeds set the example by the formation of a Missionary Society, the first public meeting of which was held on the 6th of October, 1813. Halifax followed on the 10th of November, and York on March 24th, 1814. On the preceding evening the Rev. James Wood preached an introductory sermon from Acts xvii, 16, in which he set forth in an affecting manner the awful condition of the heathen world. The meeting was held on Thursday at two p.m., the Rev. James Wood occupied the chair, and the following formidable array of speakers discussed the several resolutions: Robert Spence, William Warrener, John Reynolds, James Buckley, Jabez Bunting, Joseph Agar, Daniel Isaac, William Leach, Thomas Ingham, William Dawson, John Hick, Richard Burdsall, Thomas Simmonite; also Messrs. Tuckington, Musgrave, Ayre, Sissison and Booth. The substance of the various speeches may be found in the Methodist Magazine under date, but we quote the concluding remarks

* Dr. Smith's History of Methodism, Vol. II, p. 543.

of William Dawson. "The various miseries of human life have claims upon us, but they are not superior to those of Christian Missions. Hospitals, alms-houses and public charities, with which York abounds, have claims upon its inhabitants, but their claims are not superior to those of Missions. The Bible Society has claims, great claims upon us; and though much has been said and done for it yet there has not been enough said and done; but even these claims are not superior to those of Missions. The Bereans had the Scriptures; but it was necessary notwithstanding, that Paul and Silas should go and preach the Gospel to them. In the Bible Society we see the blushing of an opening dawn, in the Missionary Society we see the brightening beams of a glorious sun, portending a glorious day; and he hoped, as York stood one of the first on the list of the Bible Society, it would not be the last in missionary exertions." The business of this memorable day was closed with an appropriate discourse by Jabez Bunting, from Judges v. 23.

Mr. Dawson's hopes were realised; for some years the York Methodists had raised for missionary purposes amounts varying from £70 to £100; this year they produced £271; and from that time to the present they have continued to enlarge their bounty, until the annual contribution to the general fund has reached the noble sum of £2000. To this satisfactory result the York Methodist Juvenile Missionary Society, instituted in 1820-1, has largely contributed; certainly York stands pre-eminent among the circuits of Methodism in its liberality and zeal for Christian Missions. A higher honour is, that York has provided its full share of earnest and successful labourers, and there is hardly a clime or a sphere of toil in which their foot-prints

are not found. Boardman and Pilmore, the pioneers of American Methodism, were born and bred within the limits of the York Round, and were sent forth with the first offerings and earnest prayers of the York Society. William Warrener, a native of Strensall, in the New Street circuit, was one of the first missionaries to the West Indies, and in his footsteps followed, Thomas Richardson, whose life was cut short by yellow fever ere a year had rolled away; William Coultas; William Jewett, who as he ascended the coach to leave his native city, was saluted with the cry, "Billy be faithful;" William Clough, a man of prayer and imbued with the true missionary spirit; Edward Branstone, whose brief but successful ministry was closed with the exclamation "I am on the Rock,—I am happy;" and Thomas Pearson, humble, faithful, zealous and wise to win souls. To Nova Scotia, York sent John Hick, and to Canada, George Newlove, whose promising career was terminated in a few weeks by cholera. To Ceylon, the York society gave Robert Spence Hardy, whose learning was as profound as his ministry was faithful and sincere; and to South Africa, Thornley Smith and his brother George, workmen that need not be ashamed; also Robert Matterson who now labours in the field. To Fiji, was given Richard Burdsall Lyth, who translated the poetical books of Scripture, from Job to Malachi, into the native dialect, and laid the foundation of a native ministry; completing his period of active service in Gibraltar. To China, was devoted David Hill, whose praise is in all the churches, and Thomas E. North, a youth full of promise, whose spurs are yet to win, and lastly that Continental Europe might not be forgotten, the writer of these pages was designated to Germany.

It is worthy of record, that before the estimable Barnabas Shaw arrived in Cape Town, there existed a small society, formed no doubt by Methodist emigrants, over which one who had recently been a member of the Society in York, exercised the oversight. This was William Pennil, a private belonging to the band of the 21st Regiment of Dragoons, which was removed from York to the Cape. He is described as an excellent man and an ornament of the church in Cape Town. As pastor and guardian of the flock he preached both on Sundays and week-days, and led the classes; and his sermons are said to have been of a superior order, "such as would have been admired in England."*

On the 14th of August, Mr. William Dawson preached a funeral sermon at Huntington, near York, on the occasion of the death of Mr. Edward Wade, who had long occupied a prominent position in the York circuit, and discharged the functions of circuit steward about the year 1780. Mr. Wade married, as his second wife, Mrs. Gibson, a relative of the Rev. Walter Sellon, and a lineal descendant of the family of Wyckliffe,—"the morning star of the Reformation." Her son, Mr. Walter Sellon Gibson, was brought to God under the ministry of Mr. Dawson, when a boy at Sturton Grange. After preaching the funeral sermon in a field near the village, Mr. D. returned to the city and preached in New Street Chapel to a crowded and deeply affected congregation.†

The first race of York Methodists whose early associations and sympathies attached them closely to the Established Church, was now fast disappearing. Burdsall and Spence

* Letter of Rev. Samuel Broadbent to Mr. Joseph Agar.

† Dawson's Life, p. 272.

remained, but both were well stricken in years. It is not therefore surprising that the new generation, now rising to influence in the society, who had no such predilections, should desire the full freedom of action already enjoyed in many surrounding circuits. The old practice, continued now for seventy years, of holding public service at eight o'clock on Sunday morning, that the congregation might have the opportunity of adjourning to parish church, was become irksome; and as matter of fact comparatively few availed themselves of the opportunity. The practice too, of resorting to the church for the reception of the sacraments was equally distasteful to many; they desired to receive them at the hands of their own ministers whom they loved, and from whose lips they were accustomed to hear the word of life. Some in consequence neglected the Lord's Supper altogether. Under such circumstances these matters became the subject of long, earnest and prayerful discussion in the leaders' meeting, until at length it was decided that the morning service should be continued as before, but that the permission of Conference should be obtained for the administration of the sacraments. This was done in the usual course, and the first sacramental service was held in New Street Chapel in the autumn of 1815. The occasion was one of great solemnity and power. No less than 290 communicants* joined in the holy service, and a month later this number was augmented by 100 more. Yet good old Mr. Burdsall expressed his fear that the Methodists would become "*deadly formal*," and vented his pious alarm in the exclamation, "Parson and clerk! Parson and clerk!"

The introduction of the Lord's Supper was followed by

* Private letter.

very blessed results. The preceding year had been one of comparative spiritual barrenness: now and then the cry of the penitent was heard mingled with the voice of joy and thanksgiving; but there was no general movement and the congregations had slightly diminished. Now all was changed; the chapel was crowded, the society was quickened, the members were united and in earnest, and there commenced a gracious revival of the work of God, which extended throughout the circuit. The circuit ministers, Rev. Messrs. Miles Martindale, John Nelson, Jun. and William Stones, entered heartily into the work, and were supported by an energetic band of 70 prayer-leaders, among whom were numbered the most influential members of the Society. These conducted meetings chiefly in the country places, while a band of 37 ladies rendered similar service in various parts of the city. The gratifying result as reported at the ensuing Conference in 1816, was an addition of 350 new members.

To meet the growing desire for a morning service at half past ten, and also provide accommodation for the overflow at Newstreet, a new chapel was projected in Skeldergate. The chief promoters of the scheme were Messrs. Isaac Taylor, John Dyson and John Lyth, Mr. Taylor contributing £100, and the two latter £50 each. The new structure was designed by the Rev. John Nelson. Without any pretension to ornament, it was neat and commodious, capable of seating about 700 hearers. It was completed at a cost of £2250, but subsequently, in 1824, £800 was expended in erection of Schools. The chapel was opened for Divine worship on Wednesday, October 11th, 1816, by the Rev. Robert Newton, who preached both morning and evening, another minister

occupying the pulpit in the afternoon. The situation of Albion Street Chapel, as it was designated, was not perhaps the best that could be desired, but the purposes of the erection were answered ; a forenoon service was established which was attended by a crowded congregation; the peace of the society was preserved and its prosperity uninterrupted. Application was at once made for a fourth minister, and the Rev. John Smith, afterwards so successful in winning souls, was sent as a supply until the following Conference. The Rev. Richard Treffry, Jun., who some years later, followed him on the York circuit, and afterwards wrote his memoirs, says: "When he came to York he was in no respect esteemed a distinguished man. His talents were generally considered below mediocrity." . . . . "Still he had an active mind and was diligent in promoting prayer-meetings, visiting the sick ; and what was of still greater moment, he was artless and sincere,—a man of one motive and one desire, and he had capabilities for great energy, which only waited to be called into action and directed aright. Had the most diligent and acute investigation been employed in reference to his situation at the commencement of the itinerant life, he could not have been placed where, according to human judgment, he would have enjoyed the advantages which surrounded him at York. This circuit has been for many years in some respects peculiarly interesting. There is a simplicity, a fervour, a forbearance, and a tenderness in the character of the people, which render its recollections very dear to most who have laboured among them. At the time to which our narration refers, there was an unusual degree of religious feeling, expectation and desire, in the neighbourhood ; and these circumstances were highly conducive

to a valuable impression on the character of Mr. Smith, at this critical period of his ministerial history. York is also inseparably associated with the memory of several eminent saints of whom the Lord will record 'when He writeth of the people' that they were 'born there.' Under the influence of one of these, Mr. Smith came in a peculiar degree —I mean the late Mr. Richard Burdsall—a man whose name in that part of Yorkshire is as ointment poured forth.

But that which particularly tended to form the character, both personal and ministerial of Mr. Smith was his association with the late Rev. John Nelson. This distinguished Christian and successful minister, discerned in him the elements of an energetic and useful agent for Christ, and though they were then without order, or method, or direction, he gave them an impulse and arrangement, which in the course of a short time issued in the formation of one of the most powerful and beneficent characters that in recent times has risen among us."*

During his sojourn in York Mr. Smith obtained the blessing of entire sanctification and this was the secret of his effective ministry. Two or three jottings from his letters to his parents cast light upon the steady growth of the work of God in the city, "I have been much encouraged with seeing and hearing that the Lord condescends to work by me. If it please the Lord to use me, He has a right to me. He shall have *all*; body, soul, time, talents, *all*." "Many here speak very clearly on entire sanctification; and I believe give satisfactory evidence that they are in possession of that blessing. Who is a people like unto this people?" "The Lord has lately brought many souls to Himself in York." "I have heard Mr. Nelson preach

* Treffry's Memoirs of the Rev. John Smith, p. 40.

some such sermons as I never heard before. I never see my littleness as a preacher under any man so much as Mr. N. He has the unction—this makes him great." "Mr. John Burdsall was at York last week, and from him I got some important directions respecting study. He recommended a few books to me, some of which I have procured. I am to write to him in a short time to let him know how I come on."

Mr. Burdsall was attending the annual missionary meeting, which was also addressed by Mr. W. H. Clarkson, a local preacher on the circuit, who subsequently entered the ministry. The latter delivered a famous speech, which was thought worthy of publication, and the meeting passed a resolution recognizing with pleasure the formation of a Juvenile Society, and thanking the promoters of it. To whom these thanks were due we cannot ascertain, but the first Treasurers were Miss J. Cooper and Mr. G. Burdon; and the first Secretaries Miss E. Watson and Mr. J. Chadwick.

CHAPTER XVI.

Times of Refreshing. 1818—1828.

In 1818 the newly appointed ministers were Henry Moore and Daniel Isaac. The return of the latter to the York circuit was welcomed by the several societies with great joy; but the general opinion was that no two men could have been more unequally yoked, as they had somewhat keenly opposed each other both in the Conference and by means of the press. On the announcement of the appointment, a friend wrote to Mr. Isaac pleasantly observing, "We shall have to build another stable in York, as you and your superintendent will be unable to put up horses together." Mr. Isaac with equal good humour replied, "You may postpone the erection till I arrive; I have no fear but we shall agree very well."* And so they did, for though no interview had taken place till they met in York, "the fine flow of spirit between them was like the confluence of two streams—the two became one—gliding on with the harmony of the 'spirits of just men made perfect.'" Mr. Moore's prejudices were very strong, but they melted away before the genial temper of his colleague. No subject of importance could be discussed without first consulting him; "no business of moment transacted without his presence; arm in arm on their first appearance in the city, they were seen, like father and son, pacing along the streets to the house of God, where the one was to listen to the other while delivering his introductory

* Polemic Divine, p. 157.

sermon."* Indeed Mr. Moore confessed: "When they appointed me to travel with Mr. Isaac, I felt exceedingly opposed to it, chiefly from what I had heard, and read in his works. On meeting with him my prejudices instantly gave way; and I found him one of the most affectionate, agreeable and faithful fellow-labourers I ever travelled with."†

In consequence of Mr. Moore's advanced age the management of the circuit devolved in a large measure upon Mr. Isaac, and was as efficiently discharged as it was cheerfully undertaken. On one occasion a circumstance occurred which threatened to occasion trouble in the society. To obviate this, and meet what he denominated the "tug," Mr. Moore requested Mr. Isaac to take his place in the country. Mr. Isaac declined, saying he would meet the case. Mr. Moore replied that he could not think of involving him in trouble. "Leave that to me," returned Mr. Isaac, "try me this once, and if I do not settle it to your satisfaction, never trust me again." The offer was accepted and Mr. Moore afterwards said: "I had no occasion to repent. Indeed I was thankful that I permitted him to undertake it, for he managed it so well that I heard nothing more of it. He was the best for settling a dispute I ever knew; what he did was wise and decisive."

The decision which marked Mr. Isaac's character is well exhibited by the following incident, which occurred about this time. Dining with a friend, he missed his spectacles, and on his return home sought them where he recollected he had left them. As they were not there, he enquired of the servant whether she had removed them. Being informed she had not, he asked whether anyone had been

* Polemic Divine, p. 158. † Ibid, p. 159.

in the room. She replied, a gentleman had called, which she had intended naming. "Was he in the room?" "Yes sir." "Did he give his name?" "No sir. He merely enquired whether you lived here, said he wished to see you, and asked how long it would be before you returned. I told him, I expected you home in a short time; on which he said he would step in and wait a little, as he had taken a seat in one of the coaches and had to leave the city very soon. I then showed him into the parlour, where he sat down; and after stopping a short time, he left, saying he would call again." "He has stolen my spectacles." "He seemed a respectable gentleman." "There is many a respectable looking villain. What was he like?" Here followed an accurate description of his person and dress; and with this, Mr. Isaac, as if by instinct, proceeded to one of the principal inns, and enquired whether a person answering such a description was in the house. The reply was in the affirmative, and he was ushered into the room where he was sitting. Without ceremony he said, "My name is Isaac, sir." The stranger bowed politely and returned: "I have not the pleasure of knowing you, sir." "You have been at my house, sir, and have stolen my spectacles." "Me, sir, been at your house, I neither know you nor your house." Elevating his voice Mr. Isaac resolutely retorted, "I insist upon you, sir, delivering up those spectacles to me at once." Rustling up in all his majesty, and turning on his heel, the stranger replied, "Do you know, sir, to whom you are speaking? I am a clergyman and will not be insulted in this way." "Sir, I shall have no trifling; and if you do not deliver them to me immediately, I will instantly

send for a constable and have you taken before the civil authorities."

Finding that his unceremonious visitor was not to be put off with assumed airs, the delinquent drew the spectacles from his pocket and returned them to Mr. Isaac, apologising for his conduct, and imploring forgiveness. After a severe reprimand Mr. Isaac left him without seeking any information respecting his true character.*

In one of his discourses in the city, Mr. Isaac dwelt upon the expression, "I fast twice in the week," and was not long in finding his way to the Papists. "They," said he, "profess to fast during Lent; and state that they take *fish* not *flesh*. Well they take fish according to their own confession. But does not St. Paul tell us that 'All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of *fishes*, another of birds?' If they take fish, then they take, in apostolic language, *flesh* also; though they declare they take none, but *only fish*. This is not all; they have puddings of various kinds, made in every way to pamper taste, and then eat to repletion. This is fasting. Aye!" Then putting his thumb in his waistcoat pocket, placing his right elbow on the Bible, inclining the side of his person to the front gallery, and bending his head towards the poor members of his congregation sitting below on his left, he said, with a look in which indignation, pity, irony, and contempt were all blended, "I suppose some of you poor people would have no objection to a fast of this kind every day in the week."

The following advice "to all Bible Thumpers" was found written by his hand in one of the village pulpit

* Polemic Divine, p. 160.

Bibles, which was sent to be re-bound. We insert it for the benefit of those whom it may concern.

"Gentlemen, you are certainly required 'rightly to divide the Word of Truth,' but I must beg leave to remind you, that to thump me to pieces, is not to divide me 'rightly.' How can you persuade others to regard me with reverence, when they see you treat me with such shocking abuse."

Up to this period Methodism was represented in York only by what is termed the "Old Body." The admirers of Mr. Kilham endured but a short time. But on May 4th, 1819, Mr. Clowes, one of the founders of the Primitive Methodist Society, visited York in his capacity as a home Missionary, and preached in Pavement to a considerable congregation. "At the close of the service he told the people his name and employment; and informed them that he should preach again in a fortnight." Soon afterwards a room was taken and a society formed.* In 1820, York was made a branch of the Hull circuit,† and in 1822, "a separate circuit with above 400 members."‡

The advent of new toilers in the Master's vineyard did not in any degeee interfere with the success of the old; for Mr. Isaac under date, April 3rd, 1820, writes to his friend Galland: "We had a very good work during the last quarter. Ninety persons in the city have been received upon trial." To which Mr. G. replies, "I am glad to hear of the symptoms of a revival in York and the neighbouring circuits, and hope the people have preserved their piety, simplicity, and supreme interest in the things of God, during the late bustle (of city and county elections,

* Petty's History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, p. 80.
† Ibid, p. 126. ‡ Ibid, p. 158.

assizes, &c.). I feel much attached to the York friends; among them I first enjoyed the 'communion of saints,' and was kindly taken by the hand by them, and was led in the way which leads to glory and to God."*

Mr. Moore in a letter to Mr. Joseph Entwistle says: "Our people, like yours, are quiet, and mind their own great business:" and a little later he writes to Mr. George Marsden, "Our good people comply with everything that is ordered, but everything does not alike interest them. The chapel collection does not." After adverting to the great things done for Foreign Missions, he adds: "We must now get in our yearly collection as soon as we can. Alas! I fear the wants of the labourers who are seen, will not be regarded like the wants of those who are not seen. The adage, 'out of sight, out of mind,' is completely turned topsy turvy. Out of sight is the great desideratum. We have however a good work here in spite of the devil, the radicals and the ranters, and I am very comfortable among the people."

The removal, in 1820, of Messrs. Moore and Isaac, whose labours had been eminently successful, was a source of general regret. The only occurrence of special interest during the two years that followed was the formation of a "Sunday School Association" or Union, to encourage the opening of new schools in the surrounding villages. The first report issued in 1823 showed an increase of 5 schools, making a total of 11; with 1432 scholars. Of these, 800 were gathered in the city. In 1823, a periodical adapted to the capacities of children, was started, entitled "A Wesleyan Magazine." This occasioned no little trouble

* Polemic Divine, p. 167.

with the authorities of the Bookroom,* who objected to the use of the term Wesleyan. Mr. Isaac, who had by request written a recommendatory article, had to bear the brunt of the battle, which terminated in the censure of Conference. One beneficial result followed; the immediate inauguration of the "Child's Magazine," for the benefit of the whole connexion; but York had set the example. This same year a day-school for infants was established in Fossgate, which soon numbered 200 scholars, and was long and successfully conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Daggett.

The first meeting of the York Auxiliary Religious Tract Society was held in the Merchants' Hall, on the 9th of November, 1822. Among the speakers were the Rev. Robert Hopkins, who had succeeded Mr. Turton in the superintendency of the York circuit, the Rev. William Naylor, of Liverpool, the Rev. James Parsons, of world-wide celebrity, who had just accepted a pastorate in York, and William Tuke, Esq., of the Society of Friends. The only representative of the Established Church was the Rev. William Morgan, the deputation from the parent society. Methodism was represented on the committee by Messrs. Dyson, Agar and Spence.

The accumulation of a large circuit debt, which was generously met by subscription, rendered it expedient at the conference of 1822 to reduce the ministerial staff. The appointment stood thus: Robert Hopkins, William M'Kitrick, Aaron Floyd, respecting whom Father Agar writes to his son: "We have much cause to be thankful; the Lord is blessing the labours of our preachers both in the city and circuit. *We think them all best.* Our congregations are much increased; both chapels are now well filled on

* Polemic Divine, p. 225.

Sunday evenings. Mr. Graham's church is well filled. Lendal chapel is full. What a change have I lived to see in York!* I think I told you Mr. Parsons' youngest son, of Leeds, is ordained pastor over the church in Lendal. The father delivered the pastoral charge to his son, and a faithful one it was. Dr. Raffles preached the usual sermon."

The location of this prince of preachers, the Rev. James Parsons, in the city of York, was a great gain to the cause of true religion. For nearly half a century he continued his successful ministrations to the same congregation, though often invited to undertake a more lucrative charge. During this long period he maintained the most cordial relations with the Wesleyan Methodists, and rarely, if ever, neglected to attend the annual missionary meeting. Salem Chapel, erected to accommodate the enlarged requirements of his church, remains as a noble memorial of his life-work.

Richard Burdsall and Robert Spence were now drawing near the end of their earthly pilgrimage. They had toiled side by side in the Master's service for more than forty-five years, and had contributed largely to the growth of Methodism in the old city. They were now soon to meet on the other side of the veil. Mr. Agar, in a letter to his son, dated April 23rd, 1823, mentions a pleasant incident. He says: "Brother Spence and Brother Burdsall were in the pulpit Sunday before last at the lovefeast:—two old

* In 1815, among all the numerous churches in York, not one was opened for Divine Service on Sunday evening. The only places of worship available were the Methodist Chapel in New Street, and the Independent Chapel in Jubbergate. At length St. Saviour's was opened by the Rev. J. Graham, who soon gathered a large and influential congregation.

veterans.—Friend B. is the more vigorous though he is fourteen years older; he is in his eighty-ninth year. He now lives near his son Lyth, and enjoys better health." Yet Mr. Burdsall was the first to fall. A premonitory attack occurred in the following autumn, which at the time affected his speech, but on recovering a little, he expressed his confidence in these remarkable words: "It is rolled up; it is rolled up. I am satisfied. I am ready; when the Lord pleases, I am ready. The Lord hath given me eternal life. I know the Lord; I shall not perish. I shall not perish for I am the Lord's." During the winter he rallied again and resumed his labours until about the 10th of February, 1824, when he preached his last sermon in Coffee Yard, from Ezek. xxxiii. 19. "But if the wicked turn from his wickedness and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby." As soon as he had finished, a lady rose up and said, "Thank you, sir, I never heard the Gospel till now. I have found that which I have been seeking seventeen years, and came to York to get. I have been to all the churches in vain, but now I have learned the way of salvation. I am a pardoned sinner." The venerable preacher clapped his hands and exclaimed: "Woman, if ye've got any good, give God the glory. Hold on, hold on till you can crown Him Lord of all." He reached home with difficulty and a day or two after had another seizure, which admitted no hope of recovery. His last testimony to the truth was strong and clear, and continued to be borne until the power of language failed. To Mr. M'Kitrick who came to visit him, he said, almost in the words of the amiable Addison: "You are come to see a Christian die," and then added, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; I used to

sing that in the church when I knew not what it meant; but now I do." Not the shadow of a cloud rested on the valley; it was full of light: and on the 24th of February, he departed "in the full triumph of faith." Thousands followed him to the grave crowding both the church and the church-yard, where the last office was performed by the Rev. John Overton. On the 14th of March, the anniversary of his birth, his death was improved in Newstreet by Mr. Hopkins, and in Albion Street by Mr. M'Kitrick.

Mr. Spence survived his friend but a few months. He had followed him to the grave, and on his return home seemed deeply affected. Sitting down in his arm-chair he exclaimed: "Well, it will be my turn next;" but he contemplated the prospect with tranquility and hope. His last affliction was long and painful, yet borne with exemplary patience, and unwavering trust in God. To his medical attendant, whom he suspected of entertaining sceptical views, he said: "I shall soon slip through your fingers; but I can tell you a thing very well worth knowing," and then earnestly exhorted him to seek religion, telling him how through life, and even now in the prospect of death, he could rest his soul on the merits of Christ. "Well," said the doctor, "but you know we must do all we can to preserve life;" to which he replied: "Oh yes, yes, but religion is the most rational thing in the world." On another occasion when Mr. Hopkins repeated the words,

> "Jesu, lover of my soul,
> Let me to Thy bosom fly,"

and said: "That is your anchor;" he replied, "Exactly! I am in the hands of the Lord, waiting that His will may

be done." On the morning of his decease, August 4th, when no longer able to speak, he made signs to those attending him to kneel down, and as they silently commended his spirit to God, he clasped his hands in the attitude of prayer. When they rose from their knees, he lifted his hand and waved it, whispering feebly: "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" An hour or two later he said: "I am going." A friend replied, "You are going to Jesus." A scarcely audible, "Yes," was the reply, and shortly after his happy spirit escaped to its eternal home, there to be for ever at rest.* His remains were accompanied to the grave by a large concourse, in which were to be seen members of other churches, and some clergymen of the Established Church. The Rev. Joseph Entwistle preached his funeral sermon in Newstreet Chapel to a crowded congregation. A few months after Mr. Spence's decease the Sunday morning service in Newstreet which up to this time had been held at 8 a.m., was altered to 10-30. The wisdom and propriety of the change was soon manifest as the congregation was increased threefold.

The year 1824 is rendered memorable in the history of York Methodism by the appointment of the Rev. David Stoner and Dr. McAllum, both remarkable men and singularly gifted. The former was a revivalist of the best type;—a man of prayer and mighty power, whose ministry was signally blessed by God. His preaching was clear, discriminating, pointed, intensely earnest, and often irresistible. It touched the hearts of old and young and no sinner could escape. Once, while preaching in the vicinity of York, a little boy began to weep bitterly. A person in the pew inquired what was amiss,—if he wished to be out.

* Memoir of R. Spence, p. 207.

"No," replied the child; "but I will *never say foul words any more*." An incident like this, trivial as it may appear, illustrates the peculiar point and force of Mr. Stoner's pulpit addresses. He could not satisfy himself with general declamations, however ardent they might be against sin. He descended to particulars.*

During his residence in York he bestowed much attention on prayer-meetings, holding them at the close of almost every evening service whether in town or country. While allowing any to engage who felt disposed, he cautioned all against "much speaking," and "vain repetitions." "*Long* praying," he said, "is in general both a *symptom* and a *cause* of *spiritual deadness*. If you cannot pray short be silent." He equally discouraged noise and confusion, being desirous that everything should be done "decently and in order," and that our "good should not be evil spoken of." If any were in distress he spoke to them softly and encouragingly; but preferred dismissing the company, that he might remain alone with them; or at most invited two or three to continue with him in prayer, and then he would wrestle with God till the contrite ones found redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins.

In conjunction with his excellent colleagues he encouraged the establishment of band-meetings; the public band-meeting was revived and proved, as it still continues to prove, a means of grace pre-eminently fitted to promote the edification and unity of the church. It is not surprising that under such conditions "the word of God grew and was multiplied." Dr. Mc Allum says "a multitude, both of men and women, believed, and at least 400 persons

* Memoirs of Rev. D. Stoner, p. 204.

were added unto the Lord." In many hearts the work of grace was deepened and numbers bore testimony to the truth that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

Towards the close of the year Mr. Stoner suffered a painful loss in the death of his wife, whom he tenderly loved. Yet meekly bending beneath the stroke, he writes to a friend: "The Lord has called me to pass through deep waters since I came to York, but hitherto He has helped me. It is the Lord; and I know He cannot do wrong. I have lost the flower of all my earthly blessings; but my loss is her eternal gain. Nearly her last words were, 'The Lord is my salvation!'"

At the Conference of 1825 the York circuit, which was still very unwieldy embracing nearly 50 villages, was divided; Tadcaster being constituted the head of the new circuit. This occasioned a loss of 400 members to York, and for some little time was the cause of financial difficulty as the number of ministers was the same. Still, the balance was on the side of advantage, and the prosperity of the cause of God continued without interruption. For Mr. Stoner remarks in a letter to Mr. Jennings who was just commencing his itinerancy; "The Lord is still carrying on His work in a small degree among us. But we want a mighty flood. Seldom a week passes over but more or fewer souls enter into liberty; and if this is the case in *summer*, we hope to have a great ingathering in *winter*. 'If you wish to see extraordinary *effects* you must use extraordinary efforts.' This is a maxim confirmed by Scripture, and the experience of the church in all ages. Take it and act upon it."

During the second year of Mr. Stoner's residence in York he strenuously exerted himself in promoting the

erection of a third chapel in a poor and neglected neighbourhood. While convinced that Methodism had a message for all, he considered that its special mission was to the needy and destitute. The erection therefore of a suitable sanctuary among such a people, was a measure very near his heart, and but for his exhortations would never have been effected. The site selected lay between Walmgate and George Street, and was accessible from both. The foundation stone was laid on Monday, May 15th, 1826, by the Rev. J. Slack, superintendent of the circuit; and the building completed and opened for Divine worship on Friday, August 25th, by the Rev. Valentine Ward. The chapel, which formed a square with a gallery rising from the floor, covering about two thirds of the area, was capable of seating about 500 persons, and cost £2500.

Very much in opposition to the wishes of the York friends, Mr. Stoner, who was engaged to remain a third year, was removed to Liverpool. He had, however, the satisfaction of preaching the concluding sermon in connection with the opening of St. George's Chapel, to the completion of which he had looked forward with so much pleasure and hope. This terminated his ministerial labours in York for ever. Only a few weeks later, crossing the Mersey on a cold and stormy night after his Sabbath toil, he caught a cold which culminated in serious disease and closed his useful life. His last discourse, founded on Luke xi. 32. was delivered in a private dwelling in Naylor Street, Liverpool, on Friday, October 13th, and was one of thrilling and terrible appeal to sinners.* Towards its close he thrice exclaimed, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" and then after a solemn

* Memoirs of Rev. D. Stoner, p. 227.

and portentous pause, added, "Yet ten days and perhaps your preacher may be a lifeless corpse!" The prediction was fulfilled. Exactly ten days later on the 23rd of October he expired. His last words were the echo of his earnest ministry; summoning all his strength he cried aloud, "Lord, save sinners! Save them by thousands, Lord! Subdue them, Lord! Conquer them, Lord." He reiterated these petitions nearly twenty times; then sank down, reposed his head on the pillow and expired without a struggle or a groan, a little before twelve o'clock, aged thirty-two years, and six months, universally lamented.†

His friend and colleague, Dr. Mc Allum, remained in York, but before the year had rolled round, rejoined him in a better world. In January, 1827, repeated exposure to storm and tempest in the discharge of ministerial duty brought on a long and tedious illness, during which his general state was one of calmness and peace; but occasionally he felt in so remarkable a manner the presence of God, that, as he said, he was almost constrained to cry out "Lord, stay Thy hand, lest the clay tabernacle break." Two or three days before his departure, when informed that he had only a few days to live, he said, "Well, God cannot err. All that He does is right; and He has said 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'" "He fell asleep in Jesus," July 2nd, 1827. The Rev. Jon. Crowther, who preached his funeral sermon in Newstreet Chapel, says: "His talents, as a public and especially as a purely extemporaneous speaker, were of the first order." "His style was in general remarkably chaste and easy, and often peculiarly elegant." And Dr. Beaumont remarks, "For

* Memoirs of Rev. D. Stoner, p. 240.

agreeableness in private and social life, I never met his like; I never saw his equal. He possessed in a high degree, and in equal proportions, the desire and the art of pleasing. The music of his voice, the smile of his face, the kindness of his heart, and the intelligence and variety of his communications rendered his society pre-eminently acceptable and delightful."

During the illness of Dr. Mc Allum, his place in the pulpit was supplied by Mr. Matthew Naylor, a valuable local preacher on the York circuit, whose snowy locks, clean face and grave demeanour, have left an ineffaceable impression on the mind of the writer. He loved to expatiate on the psalms of David, from which he usually selected his text, and his plain expositions, enriched by a deep experience of the things of God, were well calculated to edify and confirm the believer in his most holy faith.

On January 19th, 1827, during the mayoralty of William Cooper, Esq., whose lady was an excellent leader in the Methodist Society, a public meeting was called on the requisition of a number of gentlemen, among whom we find the names of many well known Methodists, to take into consideration the expediency of petitioning parliament on the subject of the immolation of Hindoo widows in British India. A full report of this meeting, at which the Rev. Jon. Crowther delivered an eloquent speech, is given in the Methodist Magazine for March, 1827; and from the following paragraph it would appear that York was in advance of other towns in its protest against the monstrous evils of suttee. "The city of York has now come forward in this great cause, and it is to be hoped that other places will follow the example, in which case there can be little

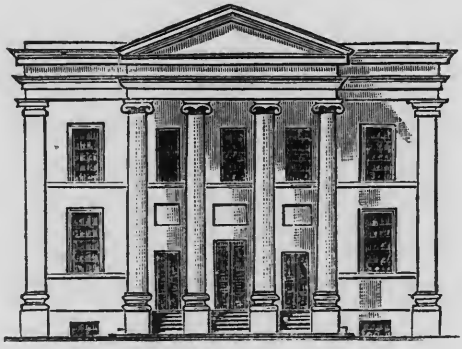
doubt as to the serious attention of government being directed to the subject."

In the spring of the year, Mr. Joseph Mortimer, who was just about to enter upon his ministerial course, spent five weeks in the city of York, warning and exhorting both old and young to flee from the wrath to come. His labours were remarkably successful. In one week not less than three hundred persons made confession unto salvation. Mrs. Lyth's class received an accession of twenty-three on one evening, and as it now numbered seventy members was divided the following quarter. Among those added to the church at this time were not a few children of leading members of society, who became eminently useful in after life.

The uninterrupted peace and prosperity which the York Society had enjoyed for so many years, was disturbed in 1828 by the agitation occasioned by the introduction of an organ into the Brunswick Chapel, Leeds. Certain local preachers came over scattering the seeds of dissension, which unhappily took root, and the result was the loss of 230 members and the erection of what was at first styled a "Protestant Methodist" Chapel in Lady Peckitt's Yard. The particulars of this controversy need not be recorded here, but it would be well in times of religious excitement to ponder the following reflections addressed at this time by a pious York leader to her brother: "My dear brother, I heartily wish we as a people *prayed more* and *talked less*. For my own part I wish to listen to the voice which I hear within 'What is that to thee? follow thou Me.' My heart replies in the strength of grace, *I will*; and set an example to the little circle in which I move."

CHAPTER XVII.

The Centenary Chapel. 1829—1850.



ELEVATION.

During the season of trial to which reference has been made, the York circuit was under the judicious superintendency of the Rev. Robert Wood, who took a deep interest in the welfare of the young. With this object in view, he formed a class for the instruction of young ladies to whom he delivered a weekly lecture, combining with spiritual instruction elucidations of Scripture, miscellaneous literature, and dissertations on several of the physical sciences. The hold on their regard which he thus obtained was employed in private in urging on them the necessity of personal religion. He also revived the Saturday class for children, to whom, with tenderness and simplicity, he gave instructions suited to their capacities.* In these efforts he was very successful and somewhat in advance of the general body of Methodist ministers.

The year 1829 is memorable for the burning of York

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. LXXVII, p. 589.

Cathedral through the act of a fanatical incendiary. On the morning of February 5th Mr. Wood's colleague, the Rev. W. Vevers, rushed into his study with a sad countenance to announce the catastrophe. Mr. Wood exclaimed: "Well, Mr. Vevers, what makes you so woe-begone this morning?" "Why, Sir, the minster is on fire." "The minster on fire! Is the Ouse on fire?" replied Mr. Wood incredulously. It was too true. The fire was discovered about seven a.m., and spread rapidly over the richly carved oak pews and elegant tracery work of the choir. By nine the whole choir was in flames and the roof began to fall in large masses. At eleven the roof was destroyed, but the progress of the fire was arrested; and by two o'clock all danger of further damage was at an end. Jonathan Martin, the author of all this mischief, was brother of John Martin, the painter, and unfortunately a member of the Methodist Society in Lincoln. He had attended the prayers on the preceding evening, and concealed himself behind the tomb of Archbishop Grenfield, in the north transept. About midnight he commenced his work of destruction, and at five a.m. escaped through one of the windows of the N. transept, looking back with pleasure, as he afterwards stated, on the "merry blaze" which began to shoot up. He was taken into custody six days later at Hexham, and tried at the York Assizes before Baron Hullock, on the 31st of March. Mr. Alderson, the counsel for the prosecution, did his best to implicate Methodism, but without success. Henry, afterwards Lord Brougham, defended the prisoner, and the jury returned a verdict of insanity, on which he was ordered to be confined in the New Bethlehem Hospital, London, where he died, June 3rd, 1838. The damage occasioned by the fire

amounted to £65,000, which was raised by a national subscription.

Mr. Wood, accompanied by several members of his family, visited Jonathan in the city jail. He declared himself called of God to the execution of this work, adding that the congregation, now driven from the minster, would be compelled to go to other places of worship, where they might hear the true gospel. He intimated that the Lord had a similar work for him to perform at Durham; if so, he should be liberated to fulfil his mission; if not, all would be well. After a long interview Mr. Wood parted with him under the full impression that he was a "pious monomaniac."

Mr. Benjamin Agar, whose brother Joseph had been recently cut off in the midst of his ministerial usefulness, was induced in July this year to join the church; a decision which was no doubt encouraged by the advice of his friend, the Rev. J. Crowther, who wrote to him in these words: "Your cordial union with the society would, I am sure, be an occasion of peculiar blessing to you; it would greatly multiply your means of being a blessing to others, and it would at the same time rejoice the heart of your father, who since the death of your brother has not been without reason for the mournful complaint, that he has no son to keep his name in remembrance in the Connexion of which he has been so many years a consistent and honourable member. I hope ere affliction and infirmity have lowered him to the grave, he will have the satisfaction of seeing at least yourself, if not your brother also, subscribing with your hands unto the Lord and naming yourselves with the name of the God of Israel. Such a sight would be to him another ray of light to cheer the

valley through which he must shortly pass, and he would have the consolation of having seen, for all his children as well as for himself, the salvation of God." Mr. Agar did not content himself with uniting himself with the visible church, he immediately sought and found union with its great Head by living faith. On Saturday, 16th July, he called on Miss Croft to beg an interest in her prayers; she received him kindly, and referred him to a poor but pious man, named George Thorp; who had power with God and had been much blessed to many. The same evening he called upon Mr. Thorp to unburden his mind, and invited the good man to come and see him on the following day, which was Sunday; as he had some business to do that night. Mr. Thorp urged an immediate application to the throne of grace. Together they entered into the "secret chamber" and pleaded with God for about half an hour, when light broke in upon Mr. Agar's mind, and the words were applied, "Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee." Mr. Agar's own words are: "I did not feel ecstatic joy, but I was constrained to give glory to God, and was kept in that frame during the night. When I woke in the morning the thought came to my mind, take the evidence, however small, and the same fountain is open for a further supply. . . I read Mr. Wesley's sermon on the 'Witness of the Spirit' and I found it accorded with my own experience almost to the letter."*

In 1831 York was visited by cholera. During this calamitous visitation the Society of Friends raised subscriptions to meet the necessities of the afflicted poor; but finding it difficult to obtain visitors, who were willing to hazard life in the cause of christian benevolence, the

* Letter to his sister, afterwards Mrs. Beet.

sick visitors of other denominations were invited to assist. The Rev. Thomas Rowland, with two others, Miss Bentley and Mrs. Hudson, presented themselves, and trusting in Him who hath said, "A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee," they set forth on their perilous mission and were mercifully preserved.

In 1832 the Rev. Daniel Isaac was appointed to York for the third time, but his work was well nigh done. On Sunday, September 23rd, he improved the death of Dr. Clarke in York, and on the next day preached for the Foreign Missions in Haxby, where he was expected to address the meeting on Tuesday evening, but God ordered it otherwise. While breakfasting at Mr. Lyth's, at Eastfield House where he was staying, he was seized with paralysis. Providentially Mr. R. B. Lyth, who had just completed his term of service for the medical profession, was present, and adopted such means as moderated the violence of the attack. Mr. Isaac's intellect was not perceptibly injured, but his left side was rendered almost entirely useless. In a few weeks he partially recovered the use of his limbs, but was never able to resume ministerial work. Other attacks followed, his mind was prostrated, and, completely broken down, thus he lingered on till the 21st of March, 1834, when death put an end to his sufferings. Many weeping friends accompanied his remains to their final resting place in St. Olave's churchyard, and funeral sermons were preached at each of the three chapels a fortnight later. Though the nature of his affliction precluded, except at intervals, anything like joyous experience, his faith never wavered. "I have," he said, "faith in Christ; it is but little; but it is what saves

me. I have no hope but in Him. He is all to me."

At this time the York chapels were crowded, and the city societies in a prosperous condition, it was therefore agreed to ask for a fourth minister, who was accordingly appointed at the conference of 1834. The troublous times which followed in consequence of the establishment of the Theological Institution and the divisive action of Dr. Warren, were however keenly felt in York, as his friend and sympathizer, the Rev. James Bromley, then labouring on the circuit, was greatly esteemed and admired. Yet the loss of members was insignificant; a few joined the "Protestant Methodists," who, with the followers of Dr. Warren, were now in many places incorporated in a body under the title of the "Wesleyan Association."

Notwithstanding these unpropitious circumstances the work of God went steadily on. A private letter dated February 9th, 1835, says: "We increase in numbers and a few in devotedness to God, but many I fear content themselves with little of that blessed union with Him which it is our privilege to enjoy. We have had a prayer-meeting every morning at six o'clock since Christmas. That man of God, John M'Lean has been among us. Mr. Bromley has the largest congregations." The ladies meanwhile were busied in preparing for a bazaar, which was held in autumn, and the proceeds, amounting to £200, were devoted to Foreign Missions.

The three years following were distinguished by an unusual flow of christian liberality, which gave an impetus to the growth of Methodism in York which is felt to the present time. First in 1836, under the superintendency of the Rev. John Burdsall, who returned to finish his ministerial labours in the city of his childhood, the two

ministers' houses adjoining Newstreet chapel, which had begun to yield to the force of time, were rebuilt at a cost of more than £1000. Next came the "Centenary Fund" in 1838, when Methodism commemorated its birth by a series of meetings held throughout the land, which abounded with grateful praise to God and generous gifts. To this fund which reached the noble sum of £221,989, voluntarily given to promote the work of God, the York circuit contributed £1213, an amount the more creditable as a project was in hand for erecting a new and costly chapel. In September, 1838, the Trustees of Newstreet met to devise means for reducing the existing debt, and providing additional accommodation. After much deliberation they unanimously agreed that the best plan of relieving the trust would be to erect a large new chapel worthy of the city of York: but the work should not be commenced until the sum of £4000 was subscribed. To encourage a spirit of liberality Joseph Agar, Esq., just verging on fourscore years, after a telling speech which acted as a charm on the meeting, promised 500 guineas; Mr. Ald. Meek followed his example and promised 500 more; and before the meeting closed the amount subscribed was over £2000. In the course of a few months the sums promised amounted to £4900, of which £600 was raised by an appeal to the members in the various classes. The site chosen for the proposed building lay in St. Saviourgate, and included several properties in the possession of different owners, some of whom were little disposed to favour the erection of a Methodist chapel, but by prudent management the whole was secured; though actual possession was not obtained till the following August.

The foundation stone of the Centenary Chapel was laid

by Mr. Joseph Agar on the 1st of October, in the presence of nearly 1000 spectators, with the usual ceremonies. The morning of the day was ushered in with united prayer, and the evening closed with a tea meeting, at which 1200 persons were present, who shared the common joy. The chapel, designed by Mr. James Simpson, of Leeds, is 68 feet broad and 90 feet long, and calculated to accommodate 1500 persons. It is lofty, well-lighted, and admirably proportioned. The front elevation is chaste and elegant, being adorned with a portico of the Ionic order. Six weeks before the time specified in the contract the building was finished, and ready for opening; and on Friday morning, July 17th, 1840, it was solemnly dedicated to the service of God by the Rev. Dr. Newton, just returned from his visit to the American Methodist churches. A dinner was provided for the friends at the Assembly Room, after which Dr. Newton gave an interesting narrative of his recent experiences in the United States, and amused his audience not a little by informing them, that as he entered the hall he had been solicited to purchase "*Sir Isaac* Newton's last sermon preached in America." The Centenary pulpit was occupied in the evening by Dr. Hannah; and the opening services continued during two ensuing Sabbaths in which Dr. Bunting, Dr. Dixon, Dr. Beaumont and other eminent ministers took part. Among the rest was Mr. William Dawson, who dwelt eloquently upon the faithfulness of the Divine promises, and quoting the words:

> "Engraved as in eternal brass
> The mighty promise shines,
> Nor can the powers of darkness rase
> Those everlasting lines;"

shouted triumphantly, as if addressing the prince of dark-

ness: "Rub devil, rub! but all is vain; the evidence only brightens by the attempt; for the Lord

——— 'hath writ the sacred word
With an immortal pen.'"

The collections amounted to £885, which added to £4500 already subscribed, and £500 additional for an organ, made a total of £6285, leaving a deficiency of £1500 on the outlay. It is fair to add that during these special efforts the ordinary collections were not only maintained, but increased; and the Missionary income for the year was the largest ever realised. Notwithstanding the prognostications of some that the Centenary Chapel would prove "a waste and howling wilderness," it was soon filled; and it is estimated that from five to six hundred new hearers were secured. The ingenious plan of relieving the heavy debt on Newstreet Chapel by incurring a new one was a complete success; the successful daughter ministered to the need of the aged mother, and what was still better, a blessed revival of religion followed both in the city and throughout the circuit.

During the years now under review, the Methodist Church in York was favoured with tranquillity and increase. In evidence of this Mrs. Harris, the wife of the Superintendent the Rev. Thomas Harris, writes to a friend, under date, January 5th, 1840. "This afternoon we have had between 900 and 1000 persons present at the 'renewal of the covenant.' Such a number on such an occasion I never saw before; and this was only part, Albion Street being open at the same time." The Rev. John Strawe writes: "This is indeed a laborious station, but it is a happy one. I doubt whether there is a more comfortable society in the United Kingdom than the 1300 members in this city.

There is more old Methodism among them than I ever saw elsewhere. Many are deeply pious and closely united together; they are very kind to their ministers, and anxious for the prosperity of Zion." To another friend he observed: "My circuit is one of the best in the whole Connexion; and I love the people exceedingly. If I were to consult flesh and blood, a wish would spring up to build tabernacles here. But this would not answer: 'he builds too low who builds below the skies.' "*

The Rev. John Rattenbury laboured in York from 1840 to 1843, and was then in the zenith of his pulpit power. His simple earnest appeals, his persuasive manner, and the unction which attended his ministry, produced a marvellous effect. The city chapels were densely crowded, and seldom a Sabbath evening passed without some visible demonstration of the presence and power of God. On one occasion in Newstreet Chapel, when the writer was present, ninety-six persons, of their own accord, pressed forward to the communion rails or into the vestry, seeking for mercy, and during the three years, 650 members were added to the church. His farewell sermon was preached to an immense crowd in Thursday Market. Anticipating an overwhelming congregation, the friends had engaged the Assembly Room, but as thousands could not obtain admittance the service which had already commenced was adjourned to the open air. The demonstration of regret when the day of parting came was remarkable. The Railway Station was thronged with persons who wished to bid farewell; and old Father Agar sent a message to the effect that it was quite as well that he was poorly that morning and could not get to the

* Memoirs of Rev. John Strawe, pp. 29, 30.

Station to say good-bye, for if he had been there "he should have *roared*."

The erection of the Centenary Chapel to some extent superseded St. George's Chapel, which was now used as a Sunday School and Mission room. In later years it has been re-modelled, and adapted to the purposes of a day-school, and is become one of the largest and most successful in the city. The first Methodist Day-school proper, for there are now three, together numbering 1800 children, was established in Albion Street on the 30th of March, 1840, of which Mr. Lyth was appointed treasurer. In 1846 a Methodist Ragged School was commenced in the Bedern by Mr. J. W. Locking, in which Mr. T. B. Smithies took an active part, but through some misunderstanding not clearly explained, it was superseded after a year's successful experiment, by the establishment of the York Industrial Schools.

An attempt was made in 1843 to limit the York circuit by constituting Stamford Bridge the head of a new sphere of labour, to include Dunnington, Warthill, Holtby, Flaxton, Sandhutton, Claxton, Stockton and Wheldrake. This scheme was strongly opposed in the Quarterly meeting, but the overpowering eloquence of the circuit steward, Mr. William Whitehead, Senr., bore down all opposition and carried the day. Eighty pounds was voted to help the new circuit to set up housekeeping; the Rev. Jabez Palmer was the first minister appointed and the last; for after a year's trial Stamford Bridge came back again with a debt of £100.

About this time an interesting incident occurred. Margaret Howard, a poor Irishwoman, and a Roman Catholic, came to York with her husband in search of

work. Here he suddenly left her without any clue to trace his steps. Destitute and without friends, she contrived to eke out a precarious livelihood by selling matches. One Sabbath evening she strayed into Newstreet Chapel, and as the minister told the story of the lost sheep and the Good Shepherd, explaining its meaning in simple and earnest language, poor Margaret's eyes filled with tears and she bent forward to catch every word that was spoken. The service over, she returned to her miserable lodging full of the thoughts which had that evening for the first time entered her heart. "When I got back," she said, "I never thought to lay me down to sleep. I knelt down in a corner of the room and cried to God to be merciful to me a sinner. The people in the room thought I was mad, and they laughed and shouted at me: but I didn't heed them; for I felt I must get my soul saved. And bless the Lord, He heard my prayers, I got up singing 'Glory to God,' for I could think of nothing else to say." Her case soon became known to a pious lady, who had observed her eager attention at the chapel, and finding out her wretched home, gave her a few shillings, with which Margaret hired a small room. As she was an excellent laundress, she procured a washing-tub and through the interest of her friend soon obtained a little work. By degrees her skill and obliging manners commanded success. Her little room became a pattern of cleanliness and comfort, and she regarded it with a grateful pride. "Sure Ma'am," she said to her benefactress, "religion's done a *dale* for me; that it has. Why, wasn't I once just tramping about the streets with my two or three bits of things to sell, and never a place to put my head into, but a corner of a dirty lodging house? And now I've a home

of my own, that I wouldn't change with any lady in the land; and better than that, bless the Lord, I've a mansion preparing for me in my Father's house above. And see ma'am, afore I got religion I'd hardly a rag to my back; and now I wear a dacent gown and a good warm shawl. Ay, ma'am, and I've got the garment of salvation, too. O, yes! I often says to myself, Margaret, says I, that was a good day for ye, when ye got religion."

Margaret did not eat her morsel alone, she sought by deeds of lowly love to benefit her neighbours, and many lost ones by her earnest efforts and bright example were attracted to the fold of the Good Shepherd. Ultimately by her exemplary conduct she obtained a confidential situation as matron in a Penitentiary.

During the summer of 1845 the Rev. James Caughey spent several weeks in York conducting religious services every day in the various chapels, which were attended with many proofs of the Divine power and blessing. The tide of prosperity which had set in with the erection of the Centenary Chapel, flowed on so steadily and constantly that the report presented to the Conference of 1846 showed an increase during the interval of six years of 1000 members, and serious thoughts were entertained of building a commodious chapel in Micklegate to supersede Albion Street, which was not only small, but inconveniently situated. With this view, Mr. Joseph Peart purchased some property for £1350 and offered it to the Trustees at the price he had given. The offer was accepted, but before any further steps were taken, the unhappy divisions intervened, which shook the Methodist Connexion to its very centre, and the project was delayed nearly ten years. The site thus prematurely purchased was afterwards sold

at a loss and a much more eligible one secured in Trinity Gardens.

Good old Mr. Agar was taken away before the clouds gathered, and so spared the sorrow and anxiety it would have occasioned him. "Bless the Lord," he exclaimed one day when in his 86th year, "I have been now 65 years a member of society," and not long afterwards, when it became evident that his end was near, "The Lord is with me, He never leaves his old servants." Almost his last words were, "Glory, Glory! Bless the Lord, I shall soon be at home, a few more struggles and all will be well." Thus, full of days and of hope, he entered into rest on January 13th, 1847. Three days after, devout men accompanied his body to the grave, and made great lamentation over him.

In 1849, Mr. Ald. Meek, an earnest and consistent Methodist, and a useful class-leader and Sunday School superintendent, was elected Lord Mayor for the second time. James Meek was a native of Brompton near Northallerton; and was bound apprentice to Mr. Joseph Agar, currier, of York, in 1804. For some years, though diligent in business, he "walked according to the course of this world," spending most of his leisure time at the card-table. One day, in his twentieth year, while walking along Coney Street, a light suddenly flashed upon his conscience that revealed his sin and misery. It was the turning point of his life. He left the busy city and went out into the fields to reflect and weep and pray. From that hour he resolved, at any cost, to become a real Christian. He made known his state of mind to his friend William Jewett, who took him by the hand and led him to

a class-meeting,* and it was not long before he obtained a sense of the Divine mercy. Possessed of excellent qualities, manly, upright, courteous, decisive, he soon rose to the foremost rank both in the church of his choice, and among his fellow citizens. In 1836 he was appointed the Chief Magistrate of the city and had the honour of entertaining her present Majesty, then Princess Victoria, on the occasion of her first visit to York. During his term of office he maintained his dignity without in any wise sacrificing his religious principles. He faithfully fulfilled the duties he owed to the church, and was not unfrequently seen at the Sunday morning prayer-meeting. His amiable wife on one occasion invited all the leaders and local preachers to tea and supper at the Mansion House. About eighty assembled and spent a profitable evening in friendly conversation, singing, and prayer. The respect in which Alderman Meek was held by his fellow citizens was manifested by his designation to the same office for the third time in 1851; and, after his death, the principal window in the Guildhall was inserted by public subscription in testimony of his services to the city. It is worth noting that as James Meek was apprenticed to Joseph Agar, Philip Hardcastle and David Hill were apprentices of Mr. Meek.

The disturbances of 1849 and 1850 were felt in the York Circuit with unusual severity, intensified no doubt by the fact that the Rev. James Everett, the leading spirit in the controversy, had for some years resided in the city and was highly esteemed. A spirit of strife and bitterness prevailed that ill became the professed followers of Christ. "The congregations dwindled away; the number of

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XC, p. 103.

members in the York Circuit, which in the year 1849 stood at 3058, diminished in three years to 2020; and for a time it appeared to many as if the glory of the grand old York society had passed away never to return. But there were many of God's hidden ones who pleaded in secret for the return of days of peace and prosperity and their prayers were answered.

A hundred years had now passed since the introduction of Methodism into the city of York, and there were not a few both men and women who, under the altered conditions of the times, retained the old Methodist spirit and were ready for every good work. Time would fail to tell of Isaac Taylor, a man of gentle spirit and benevolent purpose, a pattern of uprightness and stability, of James Chadwick, keen-witted, generous, hospitable and large-hearted; of William Whitehead, ardent, impassioned and full of life and zeal; of David Hill, whose love to Foreign Missions was a ruling passion, for when a youth he devoted all he earned by working overtime, a sum amounting to £70, to their support, and in later life, besides contributing £350 annually, he gave a son to the Missionary cause; of Luke Thompson, a worthy lawyer, who devoted much time and talent to the various departments of church service; of Thomas Bywater Smithies, whose subsequent labours in the cause of temperance and in providing a pure popular literature by means of "The Band of Hope Review," and "The British Workman," are universally known; and of his friend John Francis Taylor, who together with him rendered essential service in the Sabbath School and in the cause of Missions. Other names are remembered with affection; as Joseph Peart, John Lyth,

Richard Burdekin, Robert Rocliffe, Matthew Rymer, John Jackson, William Wade, John Dyson, and Francis Taylor.

There were also honourable women, not a few true "sisters of mercy," who "laboured much in the Lord," as Mrs. Benjamin Agar, a fine specimen of a Christian lady, who craved less for enjoyment than holiness; affable, cheerful and winning in her manner that the young as well as the aged delighted to be in her presence; Mrs. Lyth, whom the Rev. Luke Wiseman describes as "a saint indeed, whom to have seen and conversed with upon the things of God, even for once, was a memory for a lifetime; and her prayers were answered in having sons and grandsons called to the ministry of the gospel;" Mrs. Hill, her daughter, a veritable Dorcas whose quiet and unobtrusive kindness and deeds of charity have left an impression still fresh after thirty years, and Mrs. Jackson, another daughter, fruitful in good works and a valuable leader. To these may be added Miss Hick, Mrs. Rymer, Mrs. Gowland, Mrs. Rocliffe, Mrs. Fawcett, and many others "whose names are in the book of life."

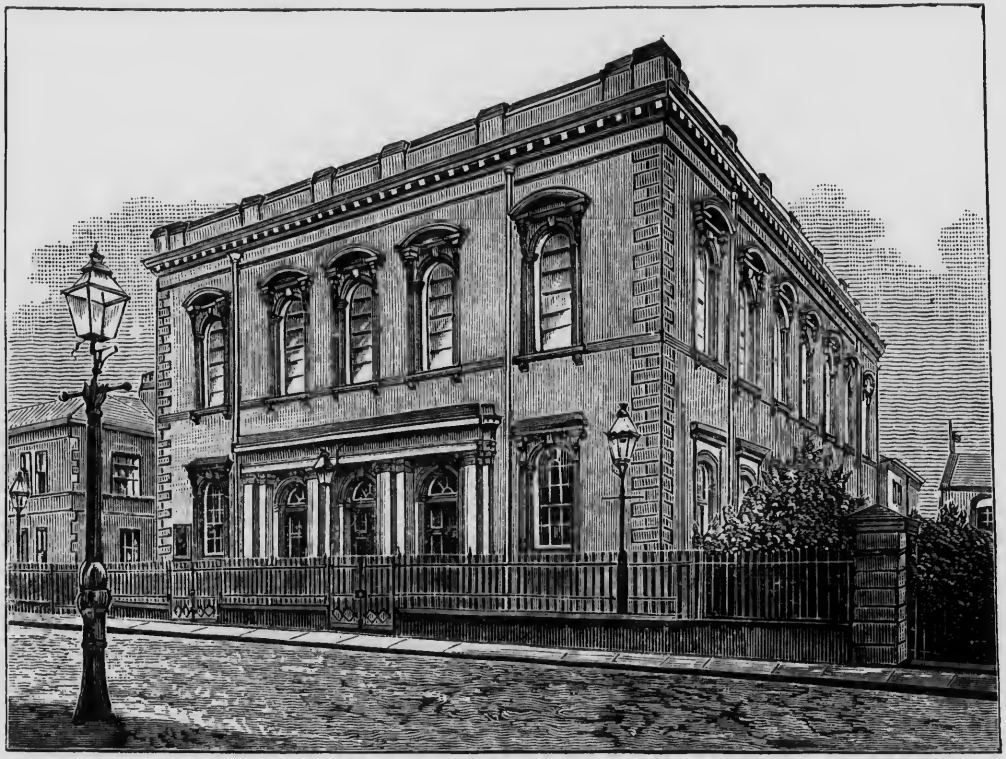
CHAPTER XVIII.

Recent Progress. 1851—1884.

The events of recent years must be summarized in a few pages. Though not less important and interesting than those of former times, they are in the memory of many, and the living actors in them,—worthy successors of the fathers, are still with us. To speak of all who deserve honourable mention would unduly extend this volume, and to make a selection might seem invidious. To some future chronicler must therefore be left the task of recording their works of faith and labours of love.

The storm had passed over, the troubled clouds gradually dispersed, the sun began to shine again, and those who had wept in secret over the breaches of Zion, lived to see better and brighter days in the Methodist Church at York than had ever been previously known. Of those who forsook the home of their fathers in the day of trial, some joined the "Wesleyan Association," and erected the chapel at Monk Bar, under the new title of the Methodist Free Church; while others invited the ministers of the "New Connexion," and built the chapel in Peckitt Street. Meanwhile those who were not given to change set themselves afresh to the work of "rescuing the perishing," and building up the "waste places." "The Covenant Service on the first Sunday in 1851, although at that time the prospect appeared to many to be as gloomy as ever, was felt by others to be a token and harbinger of returning blessing."* To this

* Wiseman's Memoir of Mrs. Benjamin Agar, p. 78.



WESLEY CHAPEL, PRIORY STREET.

desired result a succession of judicious and earnest ministers greatly contributed, among whom may be mentioned Samuel Tindall, David Hay, Israel Holgate, Gervase Smith and Frederick Griffiths.

After the lapse of two or three years the project of erecting a new chapel in Micklegate was revived. Messrs. Isaac Taylor, Joseph Peart and John Craven, who contributed £650 each, led on the movement. Some who had taken interest in it when it was first proposed had passed to their reward, but others were raised up in their place. The new site purchased in Trinity Gardens cost £1900, and was amply large enough to accommodate a chapel seating 1500 persons, with Day and Sunday schools and a commodious preacher's house. The first stone was laid by Mr. Isaac Taylor, on Easter Tuesday, April 10th, 1855, in the presence of a large concourse of people, and an address delivered by the Rev. Israel Holgate. In the evening 1500 persons assembled to the tea provided at the Centenary Chapel, for which abundant supplies were gratuitously given by a number of ladies. A public meeting in the chapel followed, under the presidency of Mr. Holgate, and was addressed by the Revs. S. Tindall, D. Hay, B. Waddy and Gervase Smith, also Messrs. Isaac Taylor, Peart, Ald. Chadwick, and C. Simpson the architect.

The chapel, which is of the true Simpsonian type, "beautiful, without any unnecessary adornment and elegant in its simplicity," was opened for Divine worship on Friday morning, September 12th, 1856, by the Rev. Robert Young, then President of the Conference, who discoursed on Eph. ii. 18. "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." After service the ministers and friends proceeded to the old chapel in

Albion Street, where dinner was provided for about 300 persons. The guests were afterwards addressed by the President, the Revs. Thomas Jackson, Dr. Hannah, James Parsons, S. Tindall, Messrs. Isaac Taylor and Joseph Peart, and the proceedings of the day were concluded with a sermon by Dr. Hannah in the new building, which was designated Wesley Chapel.

On the 1st of January ensuing, the foundation stone of the new schools was laid by the late Mr. Ald. Meek, who contributed £500. The erection of these extensive premises, in which are now gathered 630 day scholars and 805 Sunday scholars, was soon followed by a suite of vestries, &c., including a spacious hall, and a kitchen with every convenience for social gatherings, and last of all the minister's house. The total cost of these several buildings which occupy nearly the whole of one side of Priory Street and form a complete establishment, was nearly £16,000, which has long since been entirely defrayed.

"During the year 1857, the work of God in the York circuit was blessed with prosperity. For several months special prayer was offered for the revival of the work and at some of these meetings, especially in those held at noon, prayer was attended with remarkable power. No extraordinary means were adopted except that extra prayer-meetings were held, but the congregations, both in the city and in the surrounding villages, were increased, and in the course of that and the following year, many souls were awakened and converted. In some instances, artizans and field labourers were seized while at work with strong convictions for sin, which would not allow them to rest until they had found peace and mercy through looking to Jesus."*

* Wiseman's Memoir of Mrs. Benjamin Agar, p. 86.

About Christmas a good work was commenced among the military recruits, who in numbers varying from 150 to 250, were weekly passing through York.* Mrs. Helen Leak was passing down an alley behind a public-house on an errand of mercy to a poor aged widow, when her attention was arrested by some groups of rough-looking young men, who were evidently recruits for the army. Her benevolent sympathies were awakened, and after some hesitation she ventured to offer one of them a religious tract, with a few kind words of counsel. Filled with pity, she earnestly prayed that God would open up some plan by which these wanderers might be brought to the fold of Christ. At first she invited little parties to meet her at times appointed in the widow's cottage, where she read to them portions of the word of God, and such interesting books as Miss Marsh's, "Brave, kind and happy," and then kneeling down, offered prayer that a blessing might follow. Willing audiences of ten, fifteen or twenty, gave her encouragement to persevere; and being assured of the aid of her husband, with that of some other Christian-hearted men, in the work so hopefully begun, she ventured on a bolder step.

The usual resort of these young men, as may well be supposed, was the public-house. After seeking help from God, Mrs. Leak went to one of them and asked for admission. The landlord courteously introduced her to his guests and invited their attention. Turning their eyes to the door they saw a lady of matronly aspect, small in stature, neat in her attire and bearing in her countenance the traces of an energetic spirit. The noisiest reveller was silenced, and perfect stillness, as if by magic, per-

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. XCIX. p. 21.

vaded the spacious apartment. The smokers laid aside their pipes in token of attention, or drew a deeper whiff to help it; and all prepared to listen. When attention was secured, she spoke a few gentle, winning words, as the Spirit gave her utterance, and then distributed little parcels of tracts round the room. As she withdrew many eyes were bedewed with tears; and one poor lad bent his head and wept, exclaiming, half unconsciously, "How like my mother!"

There was another rendezvous—a house of superior character in its line. Thither the landlady invited Mrs. Leak to go, and thither she went, expecting to meet only a few artillerymen; but there sat the master of the house, with a large company of guests, to whom she spoke, not without trembling, but with full confidence in Him who ever helps those who seek to turn sinners from the error of their way. This unexpected extension of the work made it impossible for a lady to conduct it without additional help. Some respectable sergeants attended the meetings, ostensibly to keep order or otherwise assist, but their help was not required, for no rudeness was attempted. At length Mr. Leak hired a large room in Stonegate and fitted it up commodiously at his own expense. This was registered as a place of religious worship under the designation of a *military chapel*. A considerable number of young men, encouraged by the ministers of the circuit, formed themselves into a "Recruits Committee," and arrangements made for holding regular meetings three times in the week. At other times recruits and soldiers assembled with the usual congregation in considerable numbers; many of them were awakened to a sense of sin;

and not a few found peace with God, and proved by their blameless lives, the reality of their conversion.

During her life Mrs. Leak presided over this important movement and devoted herself to the onerous task of corresponding with the converts at home and abroad. Thousands of letters from soldiers in all parts of Her Majesty's Dominion attest her activity and diligence. Nothing delighted her so much as to hear from her numerous correspondents, whose simplicity of language and address was sometimes amusing. Some of the letters were directed to "Lady Helen Leak"—a title of honour far higher and better deserved than many which indicate nothing more than rank or a coronet. The work thus auspiciously commenced is now carried on under the direction of the Connexional "Army and Navy Committee."

The years now passing under review were marked by the removal of many faithful leaders and members of the York Society to the better land, most of whom had reached a good old age and rendered long and eminent service to the church. Sarah Bentley departed on Christmas Day, 1847, aged 80, having been a leader for nearly forty years, of two and sometimes three classes. A lady whom she visited a few weeks before her decease, says: Her whole soul was full of Divine light and power. I never saw her more cheerful. Her memory was strong as when I first became acquainted with her. She related nearly the whole of her lengthened experience, prayed, sung several hymns, the last of which was her favourite, and while singing "Him eye to eye we there shall meet," &c., she exclaimed, with hands clasped and lifted up, "Glory to God! Hallelujah! It shall be so, we shall all be there." As she was getting into the cab which was to convey her home, she

said to the driver, "Will you meet me in heaven?" Receiving no reply she repeated, "Brother, do you hear? Will you get ready and meet me in heaven?" Her last word on earth was, "Glory!"

In 1848, died Charles Jones, a local preacher and student for the ministry; Mrs. Nicholson, a preacher's widow and an excellent leader, and Mrs. Wilton, also a preacher's widow, and an old disciple of 86: all in the full triumph of faith.

In 1849, Richard Dawson, the brother of "Billy Dawson," and three old leaders, Henry Bainbridge, William Wade and Ann Fawcett, bid adieu to earth, the last whispering as she went: "All is well."

In 1850, John Coulson, a leader, and uncle of the Rev. Michael Coulson Taylor, finished his course with the words "I am on the Rock."

In 1852, William Whitehead and John Jackson, both leaders and ex-circuit stewards, fell asleep in Jesus, the latter testifying: "The Lord has always been faithful."

In 1853, John Lyth, aged 77, an old leader and ex-circuit steward, passed away crying: "Come, Lord Jesus."

In 1854, George Usher, aged 83, the leader of several classes, triumphed over death, saying: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In 1855, William Carlton, an aged and faithful minister of Christ, took leave of his family with the words: "Be thankful for ever and ever for all that occurs to me," also Mrs. Isaac, the widow of the Rev. Daniel Isaac, terminated her long pilgrimage at the age of 97, with a genuine halo of sanctity round her face.

In 1856, Eliza Hill, the mother of the Rev. David Hill,

and the two brothers John R. and Edward Hill, well-known in Methodism, after spending her last hours in sending out garments for the poor, praying for the conversion of her children and sharing in the joys of Christian fellowship, sang her own requiem :

"Ready for all Thy perfect will
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death Thy endless mercies seal
And make the sacrifice complete."

She was then smitten with apoplexy and never spoke again.

In 1858, Benjamin Agar, leader and ex-circuit steward, after a painful affliction, exclaimed, "Rest in Jesus," and found it there ; also Hannah, the wife of Capt. Geo. Smith, as she was dying looked upward and said, "Do you see that crown ?" "No," was the reply. "But I do," she said, "and I believe it is for me."

In 1859, Mrs. Coultas, widow of the Missionary, as life ebbed out, turned her glad eyes to heaven and with a look of wonder and surprise, exclaimed, "Angels"! Edward Hawkin, father of the Rev. Edward Hawkin, and an old leader, closed his earthly career with prayer and praise, saying: "Lord Jesus receive my spirit, Praise God, all is well, I feel all is well ;" also Richard Burdekin, one of the oldest local preachers, leader and ex-circuit steward, finished his course with joy.

In 1860, Mary Lyth, the inaugurator and for many years president of the Ladies' Missionary Sewing Meeting, and the leader of three classes, resigned her spirit into the hands of her maker, saying : "Praise ! Glory ! My Father ! My Redeemer !" aged 79.

In 1861, her brother, the Rev. John Burdsall, followed her home to glory and to God. The Rev. Luke Wiseman, who visited him shortly before his departure, writes : "At

that time his memory had almost entirely failed. He could not recall the name of his first circuit, or of any circuit in which he had travelled, or even the names of his own children ; nor could he recognize anyone except those who were continually about him. Yet he remembered Wesley's hymns. On the occasion just referred to, after trying in vain to find any subject to which his mind could give attention, I quoted the lines :

'Jesus my all in all Thou art
My rest in toil ; my ease in pain ; '—

and there stopped. A sudden gleam of intelligence lighted up his worn and vacant face as he looked up and in a distinct voice repeated the next line :—

'The med'cine of my broken heart ; '

leaving me to finish the quotation."* Mr. Burdsall had reached his 86th year, and though an intellectual wreck was happy in his child-like simplicity. When almost insensible of everything besides, the name of Jesus always penetrated the depths of consciousness and lighted up his countenance with a smile.

In 1862, Thomas Wade, when unable to speak, wrote with a trembling hand, "I have no doubts." Ald. Meek took leave of friends below, saying with a cheerful voice, uplifted hands and a smiling countenance, "I see, I see the road straight before me. I have nothing to do but to walk in." Robert Fawcett, a local preacher, aged 71, when reminded of the "tried foundation" replied, "Yes, I am building on *that* and it is not sand, but rock, —all rock. Jesus died for me."

Yes "it is all rock," and who, in the face of the dying saint, will venture to say that it is "a cunningly devised

* Memoirs of Mrs. Benjamin Agar, p. 116.

fable?" Therefore, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; *whose faith follow*, considering the *end* of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Notwithstanding the erection of the noble chapel in Priory Street, and its extensive schools, the need of further chapel, school and class accommodation in the city was still felt. For these objects, and the building and furnishing of another day-school in St. George's, large subscriptions had been raised amounting to nearly £10,000; yet, though but two years had elapsed, early in 1859 the Trustees were called together and a Committee appointed to report respecting further requirements and the best means of meeting them. At length a scheme was resolved upon for accomplishing the following objects. "1. The renewal, heating and embellishment of Newstreet Chapel. 2. The erection of a large room for prayer meetings, &c., and suitable class-rooms in connexion with Wesley Chapel. 3. The erection of two large rooms available for Sabbath School purposes, (in lieu of those in Wesley place, which had become inadequate,) with a sufficient number of class-rooms adjoining the Centenary Chapel. And 4. The erection of a commodious minister's house on the north side of Wesley chapel." The estimated cost of these works was £4500, and it was resolved that the whole amount should be raised so as to leave no additional debt on the trust properties. In a very short time the sum required was promised, and the contemplated improvements carried into effect under the experienced management of Mr. Edward Taylor as architect. Newstreet Chapel was transformed from an

old fashioned and unattractive sanctuary to a chaste, comfortable and beautiful house for Divine worship. Better accommodation was made for the Sabbath Scholars and for other church purposes, and the chapel reopened by Dr. Jobson on the 8th of January, 1860. By this means the congregation was increased and the society encouraged. A few months later the large hall at Wesley chapel with eight convenient vestries was ready for use, and on Tuesday, May 29th, 1860, Mr. Isaac Taylor laid the foundation of the two spacious and handsome rooms with five additional vestries and a library at the Centenary chapel. On their completion, Tuesday, January 15th, 1861, 1800 friends gathered to tea, after which, under the chairmanship of the Rev. W. Williams, the meeting was addressed by the Revs. Peter M'Owan and David Hay, Messrs. Ald. Meek, John Craven, and other ministers and friends. The following resolution, moved by Mr. David Hill and seconded by Mr. Francis Taylor, is worth preserving. "That with the additional facilities provided for public worship, and for classes, this meeting calls upon the members to give regular weekly attendance at class, and so seek to induce others to attend the house of God, and to avail themselves of the high privilege which Christian communion affords." The erection of a commodious minister's house adjoining Wesley chapel was now taken in hand and the whole of the proposed scheme, with some additional improvements, effected at a cost of £4885.

Little more than two years elapsed, when, on April 25th, 1863, the noble rooms behind the Centenary chapel, erected at a cost of £1600, were completely destroyed by fire, which originated on the adjoining premises of Messrs. Clark, Bleasdale and Co., wholesale druggists. Steps

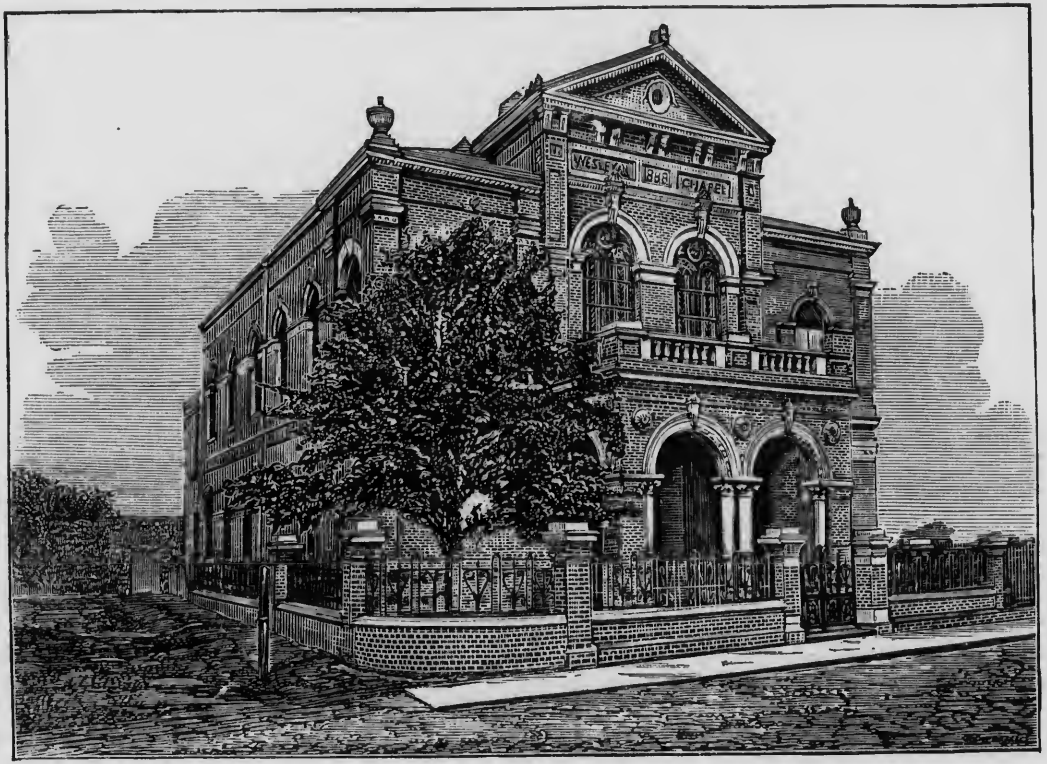
were immediately taken to repair the mischief, but six months later, on October 31st, just when the work of reconstruction was completed, and before the furniture was introduced, a second disaster occurred. Through some defect in one of the flues connected with the heating apparatus employed in drying the building, it was again set on fire and reduced to ashes. Fortunately the loss in both cases was mainly covered by insurance, the second insurance policy having been effected only a week before the accident. These circumstances were discouraging, but the increased outlay necessarily occasioned was cheerfully met, and the premises were speedily restored.

The York circuit had now fully recovered from the effects of the secession of 1848-50; a large new chapel had been built, the congregations were satisfactory, and the membership approximated to 3000. It included upwards of thirty villages, and supported a staff of five ministers. Such a wide field of labour was unwieldy, and it was generally felt that it could be worked more efficiently by dividing the circuit. Accordingly in 1867 Wesley Chapel was made the head of a new circuit with twelve places and two ministers; the river Ouse forming the line of division. The Rev. Richard Green, who was entering his third year's residence in York, was appointed the first superintendent, with the Rev. William L. Appleby for his colleague.

The advantage of the new arrangement was soon evident in the fresh stimulus given to progress. In the Newstreet circuit, which provided for four ministers and embraced twenty-two places, a neat School-chapel was opened the same year in the Groves, a populous district lying on the north eastern side of the city. This building, which with

subsequent additions has cost £2947, consists of two large rooms and a vestry. It was designed to seat 400 hearers, and to provide adequate accommodation for an efficient Week-day and Sunday School. The foundation stone was laid by Mr. now Ald. Agar.

In 1872, a School-chapel erected by the Methodist New Connexion in the Cemetery Road was purchased for the sum of £300, and enlarged at a cost of £800 for Sabbath School and Mission purposes. Two years later, the success which attended the new movement justified the erection of a handsome chapel, called Melbourne Terrace Chapel, adjoining the schools, in the Italian style, capable of seating 1000 persons and at the cost of £8307. The foundation stone was laid on the 30th of June 1875, by Mr. Alderman Agar, and the chapel opened for Divine worship on the 22nd of March, 1877, by the Rev. Alex. M'Aulay, President of the Conference. In 1883, a new chapel, to contain 800 hearers, was projected in the Groves to provide for the congregation hitherto worshipping in the School-chapel. The first stone was laid on September 12th, 1883, by Mr. William Leak, and the building opened for public worship on August 13th, 1884, by the Rev. Dr. Greeves, President of the Conference. In connexion with this scheme a large plot of ground has been purchased in Clifton, on part of which a School-chapel has already been erected, and a larger building is to be added when circumstances warrant further action. The amount already expended on these united objects is £6000. In addition to these generous efforts put forth for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, £1500 has this year, 1884, been spent in beautifying, and otherwise improving, the Centenary chapel, especially by providing



GROVES CHAPEL.

greater facilities of exit. The liberal gifts which have made such material advancement possible, need not be recorded here, nor yet the names of the donors. They are written in heaven, where an exact account is kept to be revealed in that day, when every faithful steward of his Master's goods shall receive a full reward.

In the Wesley circuit considerable, if not equal, progress has been made. The chapel premises have been enlarged and cleared of debt, involving an amount of £3656. A Mission chapel for the special benefit of those employed on the Railway has been built in Wilton Street at a cost of £800. The village chapels have all been freed from encumbrance. Several Mission Rooms have been provided in the suburbs of the city and a site purchased at the cost of £1800 for the erection of a large new chapel. Perhaps the most interesting feature in the circuit is the "Young Men's Class," which is ably conducted by Mr. Robert Kay. It answers the oft-asked question "What shall we do with our elder scholars?" and supplies the missing link between the Church and the Sabbath School. It was commenced on February 22nd, 1862, with seven youths selected from the first class in the Sunday School, none being admitted under fifteen years of age. The class, which meets on Sunday morning at 9-30 for conversation on Biblical and religious subjects, and at 2 p.m., for an address, now numbers 403 members. Of these, 71 are Sunday School workers; 42 prayer leaders or exhorters; 9 local preachers; 3 class-leaders; 166 members of society and 300 total abstainers. Ninety-four are married, and in several cases father and son occupy the same form.

With all this external prosperity, Methodism in York retains its old spirit of earnest evangelism. The prayer

meeting, the band-meeting, and the class meetings are well attended. Souls are saved, believers multiplied, and there are not a few bright examples of holy living and holy dying. Among those who after rendering eminent service to the church of their choice have of late years been gathered to their fathers, are: Mrs. Benjamin Agar, who departed to be with Christ, Sunday, November 6th, 1870, repeating the words, "Changed from glory into glory." One responded, "Then we shall be like *Him*." "Yes," she said, "Like Him! Like Him! that will be beautiful!" Isaac Taylor, who, like a shock of corn fully ripe, was gathered into the garner at the venerable age of 93; Helen Leak, who in January, 1874, passed away saying "Heaven is my home, all is well;" David Hill, who fell asleep in Jesus, August 22nd, 1876; the Rev. William Jewett, who died January 16th, 1877, after a useful ministry of sixty-eight years. Among his last words were "My love, my warmest love, my undying love to all the brethren," and in token of it he left his house and furniture for the use of a retired minister to be selected by duly appointed trustees; and William Dyson, son of John, beforementioned, who after rendering good service in Howden, finished his course in his native city, February 26th, 1877, making provision that his benefactions to the poor and other benevolent objects should continue after his death.

CHAPTER XIX.

Village Methodism.

The city of York is surrounded by a large number of villages in all of which, at one time or other, the voice of the Methodist Preacher has been heard. Fifty or sixty years ago not a few interesting incidents might have been gathered illustrating the trials and successes of early Methodism, but though the tradition remains, accurate details are no longer attainable. In most of these villages may now be seen a neat Methodist chapel, and the work of God is diligently carried on. There are, however, a few still remaining, where the persistent intolerance of the landlord has rendered every attempt to establish regular service unavailing. These are gradually becoming fewer with the increasing intelligence of the age, although in some quarters it advances with very tardy steps. At present there are 33 villages connected with the two York circuits, and as an extended notice of each would occupy more space than is desirable, they are here placed in alphabetical order, with a summary of such information as is most useful and interesting, in an abbreviated form.

ABBREVIATIONS.

N. Newstreet Circuit. *W.* Wesley Circuit. *Dis.* Distance from York in miles. *Pop.* Population. *In.* Introduction of Methodism. *Chapel.* Date of the erection of the *present* chapel. *Cost.* Cost of Ditto. *Acc.* Number of sittings. *Mems.* Number of church members in 1884.

ACOMB (*W. Dis.* 2. *Pop.* 963. *In.* 1774. *Chapel* 1879.

Cost £1963. *Acc.* 283. *Mems.* 58) was repeatedly visited by Mr. Wesley and John Nelson, and has the honour of being the first place in which Methodism was planted in the neighbourhood of York. Thomas Slaton was the leader of the class and the first local preacher. In 1789, Mrs. Beatrice Overand, left by will £200 to the Rev. Wm. Richardson (clergyman), of York, and Mr. John Shepherd, farmer, of Tollerton, to be paid to seven trustees whom Mr. Wesley or the Conference should appoint, the interest of which was to be applied in procuring a place of worship at Acomb for the people called Methodists, and also in the maintenance of the preachers who shall be sent from time to time. At the following Conference, in 1789, Mr. Wesley executed a deed appointing Thomas Dodgson, Robert Spence, Thomas Dilcock, John Dawson, George Fettes, James Smithson and William Fowler, as trustees. This document is witnessed by Dr. Coke and Alexander Mather. With the money thus provided a house was purchased in 1790 and opened for public worship by the Rev. Edward Jackson. This was superseded in 1821 by a commodious chapel, dedicated to the service of God by the Rev. Theophilus Lessey. The site of the present structure, which is an ornament to the village, was given by Mr. John Francis Taylor. Mr. John Hields fulfilled the office of leader, after Thomas Slaton, for more than twenty years, then followed a succession of eight or ten, among whom Jonathan Preston and Charles Robinson are still remembered with gratitude to God.

ACASTER (*W. Dis.* 4. *Pop.* 262. *In.* 1820. *Chapel* 1880. *Cost* £1200. *Acc.* 160. *Mems.* 52) as appears by the steward's book, contributed to the quarter board in 1760 the sum of 1s. Richard Burdsall and others occasionally

preached in the house of John Corner, now occupied by Mr. Raimes, or else in the open air; until in 1820 a society was formed, and Thomas Goodall appointed the leader. By the permission of the trustees regular preaching was established in the village school-house, where it continued until 1880, when the present chapel, which is purely Gothic, and an exquisite model of neatness, was erected. The site was given by Lord Wenlock. "Billy Dawson" usually visited this place at the Annual Missionary Meeting which was held in his brother's barn. His nephew, the Rev. William Dawson, was born here.

ASKHAM BRYAN (*W. Dis.* 4. *Pop.* 290. *In.* 1768. *Chapel* 1837. *Cost* £138. *Acc.* 98. *Mems.* 11), was visited as early as 1768, and is credited in the steward's book, in connexion with Rufforth, with 7s.; but no society was formed till 1791, when Mr. Thomas Pears preached in the house of Mrs. Mordecai Viners, and a class was commenced under the leadership of Joseph Fell,—a man highly respected and very useful. The tenement occupied by Mrs. V. belonged to a clergyman named Preston, who, hearing that the Methodists assembled there, adopted measures for their ejection, and the preaching was removed to the cottage of a labouring man named Stubbs. At length in 1802 a chapel was erected which, through the influence of Mr. John Jackson, who generously gave the ground, was superseded by a larger one in 1837.

BISHOPTHORPE (*W. Dis.* 3. *Pop.* 417. *In.* 1798. *Chapel* 1838. *Cost* £128. *Acc.* 116. *Mems.* 20). The residence of the Archbishops of York from the time of King John. A class of eight members existed here in 1798, conducted by Joseph Falkingham, but for reasons unknown was discontinued the following year. When it was resumed is

uncertain, but probably about 1823. The Rev. William Clough, who was born here, was sent as a missionary to St. Christophers, in the West Indies, in 1825.

CLAXTON (*N. Dis.* 8. *Pop.* 243. *In.* 1768. *Chapel* 1843. *Cost* £120. *Acc.* 88. *Mems.* 19), is one of the oldest places in the circuit. A society existed here in 1768, and was probably formed some years earlier. A person styled "Gentleman Greaves" was one of the first to entertain the preachers, and opened his house for service. Occasionally it was held in the School-house. Benjamin Hodgson the first leader was succeeded by Richard Heels, who faithfully filled the office for more than twenty years. In this village, which from 1794 to 1817 was connected with the Pocklington circuit, the late Rev. Dr. Newton preached his first sermon on entering the itinerancy, and subsequently opened its neat little chapel.

CLIFTON (*N. Dis.* 1. *Pop.* 3296. *In.* 1791. *Chapel* 1884. *Cost* £600. *Acc.* 200. *Mems.* 24), a suburb of York. A class was commenced here in 1791 by John Woodcock, a local preacher, who had removed from Stockton-on-the-Forest, and was continued after his death in 1806, by George Gibson until 1814, when it died out. In 1797, Miss Barrett, afterwards Mrs. Zachariah Taft, preached on the Green to a large audience. As the rain fell heavily she prayed that God would "stay the bottles of heaven for a few minutes," and the rain ceased. At the prayer meeting which followed, several persons received the assurance of pardon.* The society was revived about the year 1864, and the recent erection of a Mission chapel affords a fair prospect of further development.

COPMANTHORPE (*W. Dis.* 5. *Pop.* 327. *In.* 1787. *Chapel*

* Memoirs of Mrs. Lyth, p. 25.

1826. *Cost* £238. *Acc.* 106. *Mems.* 29). A small class was formed here in 1788, which for some years was led by John Corner, and then by William Batman, in whose hands it rapidly increased. A chapel was erected in 1796 which was replaced by a larger in 1826, and the latter enlarged in 1873. At this village the Rev. John Scott, afterwards President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, was born. His mother was a strong-minded woman with great energy of character. She commenced a religious life with a determination to serve God faithfully, and every morning gathered her children and servants, with such of the farm labourers as were disengaged, for reading and prayer. Her husband, not approving of her procedure, would enter the room cracking his whip and, calling his men by name, allot to each his daily task. Notwithstanding this, she persevered in the practice of domestic worship until the heart of her husband was softened, and he too was found kneeling among the rest. Having sought and found mercy, he died not many years after, happy in the Lord, leaving two children, John and Elizabeth. John, in company with his sister, attended a Bible-class at York every Saturday afternoon, conducted by the Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe, and in his eleventh year began to seek the Saviour. One day while praying in a barn, he obtained the assurance of God's pardoning love, which, as he often said in after years, he never lost. When taken from the village school and put to work on the farm, he always had a book with him. Once when at the plough his stepfather found him letting the horses rest while he sat under the hedge reading. "Jack," he said, "thou'lt never be fit for anything but a parson."* On Christmas Eve, 1810, the superintendent,

* Methodist Magazine, Vol. C, p. 16.

Rev. James Mc Donald, announced that Brother Scott would preach at six o'clock the following morning. This was wholly unexpected, but his first effort was such that the circuit ministers, one of whom was the celebrated E. W. Miller, were convinced of his call to preach, and his name was forthwith placed on the plan. The following year he was appointed by the Conference to the Winterton circuit. Ann Hobson was the leader when young Scott was admitted into the society,—a grand specimen of an old Methodist matron. She lived to a very venerable age until she was blind and bedridden, and longed to depart and be with Jesus. To the Rev. Richard Martin she said: "I think I'm not quite ready, or the Lord would have called me before this." It was suggested that her protracted affliction might be for the glory of God, that others might profit by her patient example. She replied: "I sometimes think of Mr. and Mrs. Scott and John Scott and them that's gone before and gotten home; they'll mebbee think I've missed my way."

DEIGHTON (*N. Dis.* 5. *Pop.* 190. *In.* 1807. *Chapel* 1879. *Cost* £679. *Acc.* 140. *Mems.* 36) is a township in the parish of Escrick where a small society has existed from 1807. The little flock was long kept together under difficult circumstances, by the vigilant care of Thomas Rooke and John Emmerson. For many years all attempts to secure a permanent meeting place were unsuccessful. More than once those who harboured the Methodists received notice to quit. At length a cottage with a small plot of garden, lying between Deighton and Escrick, was secured as a temporary preaching place, but when proposals were made to purchase it for the purpose of erecting a chapel, the steward of the adjoining estate stepped in and

bought it at an enhanced price. The Methodists were thus driven out once more to worship under the open sky as they had often done before. This was tolerable in summer, but the winter was coming on and where to find a shelter they knew not. Prayer was made continually by a few godly men, and a way was opened in an unexpected manner. Joseph Beaumont, a local preacher in the Snaith circuit, and a famous ratcatcher, came in the exercise of his vocation to "Crockey Hill," a farm in the neighbourhood. On Thursday and Friday he put his ferrets into the stacks but they continued in to a late hour; and on Saturday it was the same, until the good man became very restless, as he had two appointments on Sunday and he was twenty miles from home. To comfort him, Mrs. Hodgson (afterwards Mrs. David Hill), said: "You shall not be disappointed of preaching, you shall preach in my kitchen; I will send word to Deighton, and you are sure of a congregation." This was glad news for the little band of worshippers who had received notice that after that Sabbath they would not be allowed to hold any more outdoor meetings. The service was a blessed one, and from that day for thirty years, though the distance was a mile and a half from Deighton, the preaching was regularly held at Crockey Hill, and much precious fruit was gathered. At last, Lord Wenlock granted a site for a chapel, and by his direction a piece of land was staked out, which, singularly enough, included part of the ground which the Methodists had failed to secure thirty-five years before. The foundation stone was laid by the Rev. R. B. Lyth on May 17th, 1880, and a neat building erected, which is an ornament to the hamlet.

DRINGHOUSES (*W. Dis.* 1½. *In.* 1816. *Chapel* 1834.

Cost £180. *Acc.* 106. *Mems.* 11). The first leader was Wm. Pybus, who was succeeded by Joseph Preston in 1820.

DUNNINGTON (*N. Dis.* 4. *Pop.* 840. *In.* 1791. *Chapel* 1868. *Cost* £700. *Acc.* 154. *Mems.* 38) sent 7s. to the quarter board in 1768 and 3s. in 1769, but no society seems to have been formed until 1791. William Johnson, Robert Tateson, John Middleton, and Crispin Butler were successively appointed leaders. Under the oversight of the last, the class prospered greatly for many years. The chapel erected in 1868 superseded an older building which was small and inconvenient. The first stone of the present chapel was laid by Mr. David Hill.

FLAXTON (*N. Dis.* 9. *Pop.* 352. *In.* 1780. *Chapel* 1816. *Cost* £207. *Acc.* 126. *Mems.* 30) first appears in the circuit records in 1780, when it contributed 12s. to the quarter board. About this time a class was formed under the management of William Frear. For some years the preaching was held in a private house, then in the village school-house; until in 1816, a chapel was erected, the site of which was given by Mr. Daniel Jackson, of Askham. Mr. Ash, the father of the Rev. William Ash, contributed £50 towards the cost, and had a pew specially fitted up for the accommodation of his family. From the year 1794 to 1816 Flaxton was connected with the Pocklington circuit. On its re-union with York, William Honey, was the leader.

FULFORD (*N. Dis.* 1½. *Pop.* 3576. *In.* 1792. *Chapel* 1845. *Cost* £857. *Acc.* 235. *Mems.* 34). In 1066 a battle was fought here between Morcar, the Governor of York, supported by Edwin, Earl of Chester; and Tostig and Hardrada, king of Norway, in which the former was defeated and the city consequently capitulated. Perhaps the

proximity of the village to York accounts for the fact that no regular preaching was established until 1792, when Mr. W. Dixon, a pious Presbyterian, opened his house for the purpose, but as the fervour of the Methodists was little congenial to his taste, he complained that their hearty singing and loud devotions frightened his pigeons away. The service was therefore removed to the house of Mr. Copley, who was commonly known as the muffin-man. When he removed from Fulford a few years later, it migrated for some time from one house to another, until it found a resting-place with Mr. Waite, who in 1820 gave a piece of ground on which a small chapel was erected at the cost of £210. This was superseded by a more commodious structure in 1846, a portion of which is set apart for the use of the soldiers. The society was formed in 1799, under the care of William and Ann Smith. In 1803 the Rev. William Blagbourne settled here on his retirement from active work, and took charge of the class until his decease in 1807. Thomas Coulson and Matthew Bellerby followed in succession. In 1822 Mr. Smithies, father of Mr. T. B. Smithies, of London, commenced a second class.

GATE HELMSLEY (*N. Dis.* 6. *Pop.* 218. *In.* 1768. *Chapel* 1861. *Cost* £310. *Acc.* 150. *Mems.* 21). Preaching was established here about 1768, when for some reason or other it was temporarily removed from Stamford Bridge. John Nelson, of Murton, conducted a successful class here for many years and was succeeded by Marmaduke Lund. The first chapel was erected in 1814 and cost £130.

HAXBY (*N. Dis.* 4. *Pop.* 450. *In.* 1777. *Chapel* 1879. *Cost* £1350. *Acc.* 350. *Mems.* 67) was visited by the Methodists at a very early period. In 1777 it contributed

11s. to the quarter board, and in 1787 there was a class of twenty members under the care of George Gawthorpe, who discharged his duties with great fidelity and success for many years. In 1807, a few years after his death, the class was divided between Edward Foster and Thomas Lund. This society has been remarkably steady in its growth from the beginning. A chapel was erected here in 1782, which was superseded by a larger one in 1813, and again by the present handsome structure in 1879. Here the Rev. William Arnett was born, and the Rev. Daniel Isaac delivered his last discourse. The residence of Mr. Lyth and his family in the immediate neighbourhood for some years helped to give strength and stability to the work. A prayer-meeting was held weekly in his kitchen, which was numerously attended and made a great blessing.

HESLINGTON (*N. Dis.* 2. *Pop.* 571. *In.* 1812. *Chap.* 1844. *Cost* £120. *Acc.* 88. *Mems.* 14). Richard Burdsall preached here in Mr. Kimber's kitchen in 1812. Soon afterwards a class was formed, of which Thomas Fowler, John Midforth, and Michael Wilberfoss were successively leaders. Twenty years later the Rev. James Parsons was holding a meeting in Heslington, and invited any who wished to join his church to give in their names and their reasons for so doing. A man handed in a statement that so many years before, a person named Dicky Burdsall had preached in the village, when he was both awakened and converted; since then, as he had opportunity, he had attended the preaching of the word, and often wished that some one would ask him to join the Methodists, as he thought he belonged to them, but as this was the first invitation he had received, he gladly accepted it. He

afterwards gave full proof of his christian character and was regarded as one of the best men in the village.

HESSAY (*W. Dis.* 6. *Pop.* 116. *In.* 1779. *Chapel* 1824. *Cost* £520. *Acc.* 90. *Mems.* 25) sent 5s. to the quarter board in 1779 and reported a small class in 1780 of which Robert Bussey was the leader. He was succeeded by Thomas Shepherd, Mary Bussey, William Nottingham, Thomas Ripley, Thomas Marston, and William Agar. Between 1798 and 1807 the society seems to have been united with Rufforth. The chapel was enlarged and improved in 1882.

HEWORTH (*N. Dis.* 1. *Pop.* 610. *In.* 1805. *Chapel* 1825. *Cost* £285. *Acc.* 130. *Mems.* 35). John Nelson preached several times on Heworth Moor during his short stay in York in 1744, when detained as a soldier. The first class was formed in 1805, which for many years was conducted by William Robinson from Stockton-on-the-Forest. The present leader is Mr. Edward Hill, of York.

HUNTINGTON (*N. Dis.* 3. *Pop.* 537. *In.* 1796. *Chapel* 1825. *Cost* £230. *Acc.* 88. *Mems.* 42) was visited by the Methodists as early as 1763, but the society was formed in 1796. For some time service was conducted in the open air; at length James Eden opened his house and became the leader of the class. Little progress was made until 1825; in this year there occurred a remarkable revival, during which many were added to the church; and in the family of William Agar six were savingly converted. The need of a chapel was now urgently felt, and the people though poor, set zealously to work to raise the required amount. Mr. Jennings of Uncleby, a native of the village, generously gave the site, and the building was opened in July 1825 by Dr. Mc Allum and the Rev. David Stoner.

It was afterwards enlarged and improved at the expense of John Craven, Esq. On the removal of Mr. Eden to Hull, in 1805, the class was met for some years by the preachers, until it was undertaken by Mr. Edward Wade, assisted by Mr. Wm. Agar.

KNAPTON (*W. Dis.* 2½. *Pop.* 103. *In.* 1811. *No Chapel Mems.* None). Here a society of eleven members was formed in 1811 under the care of John Triffitt, but after six or seven years died out. Repeated attempts have been made since to establish Methodism in the village but though successful for a time they have all failed for want of suitable accommodation.

MOOR-MONKTON (*W. Dis.* 8. *Pop.* 233. *In.* 1791. *No Chapel. Mems.* 30). A class was commenced here in 1791 under the charge of Thomas Shepherd of Cockhill, who was awakened in the church of St. Michael-le-Belfrey, under the ministry of the Rev. William Richardson. For nearly thirty years he successfully fulfilled his duties as a leader, and shortly before his departure was permitted to see the "Salvation of God," in a gracious revival of true religion, in consequence of which a second class was formed under the care of Richard Walkington. On the death of Thomas Shepherd, William Barnes, a convert in the revival, took charge of the members of his class. The public service was held for some time alternately at Cockhill and Moor-Monkton; but ultimately removed to a granary in the latter place, where it is still continued. As this village is a considerable distance from the parish church, Methodism has done good service to a people otherwise spiritually destitute, and has been abundantly repaid by their steadfastness, consistency, and liberality. Why no chapel has been built it is difficult to say, except

that the people are "content with such things as they have."

MURTON (*N. Dis.* 3. *Pop.* 168. *In.* 1830. *Chapel* 1862. *Cost* £218. *Acc.* 75. *Mems.* 15). Preaching was held here for more than thirty years in the cottage of James and Nancy Preston, who came from Malton. James was the first leader and was succeeded by Mr. Young, who with Mr. Maud promoted the erection of the present little chapel.

NABURN (*N. Dis.* 4. *Pop.* 480. *In.* 1798. *Chapel* 1857. *Cost* £420. *Acc.* 172. *Mems.* 41). Drummer Johnson was the first who attempted to preach in this village, but was so persistently interrupted by a drunken man that he was obliged to desist. In 1798 Richard Burdsall was more successful; occasional preaching was established, and a class formed over which Richard Leaf was appointed leader. Two years after, the society was broken up by some of the followers of Kilham, and the preaching was discontinued; but in 1807, through the exertions of the old leader, a new society was gathered, which for forty years prospered under his care. A little chapel was opened in 1819 by the Rev. Daniel Isaac and Mr. William Dawson. This was superseded by a larger and more convenient building in 1857, the site of which was given by the late Mr. George Dickenson.

OSBALDWICK (*N. Dis.* 2. *Pop.* 197. *In.* 1813. *Chapel* 1871. *Cost* £275. *Acc.* 88. *Mems.* 15.) The society was formed in 1813, and William Holmes appointed the leader. John Burrill, James Hodgson, George Watson, and William Smith have followed in succession.

POPPLETON (*W. Dis.* 4. *Pop.* 298. *In.* 1757. *Chapel* 1817. *Cost* £184. *Acc.* 116. *Mems.* 28). Mr. Wesley preached here in 1757 on the open space near the present

chapel, when he says "the poor gladly received the word, and the rich heard it," but some of the rich received it too, for Mr. Thomas Prince, of Poppleton, and Mr. William Horseman, of Water Poppleton, were two years later both appointed trustees of the new chapel in Peaseholme Green, York. The preaching at first was held on the spot where Mr. Wesley stood, but afterwards at Mr. Prince's and occasionally at Mr. Horseman's. John Nelson, a son-in-law of Mr. Prince, became the leader of the class, and held the office until age and infirmity compelled him to resign it into the hands of Mr. Thomas Sampson. The site of the chapel was given by Mr. Thomas Hawkins, of Wistow, and the opening services conducted by the Rev. Messrs. W. Naylor and Theophilus Lessey, on Easter Tuesday, March 24th, 1818. Poppleton was the birthplace of Elizabeth Haslam, whose memoir appears in the Methodist Magazine, vol. xxiv. She was the daughter of John Fearby, Esq., and grand-daughter of one of the first Methodists in this part of Yorkshire. Gay, sprightly, and frivolous as a girl, she treated religion with contempt, and made its professors, not excepting her godly sister, the objects of her ridicule. She was convinced of sin at a prayer-meeting, and received the assurance of mercy while reading Young's "Night Thoughts." After a short but consistent career she died while on a visit to her brother in the neighbourhood of York.

RUFFORTH (*W. Dis.* 5. *Pop.* 297. *In.* 1744. *Chapel* 1843. *Cost* £180. *Acc.* 116. *Mems.* 18) occurs in the first list of places in the circuit steward's book, and is noteworthy as the residence of Mrs. Martha Thompson, of whom honourable mention is made on page 33. For a long period after her removal to London the little

society was subject to much vicissitude. The leader was repeatedly changed, and two of them, Robert Bussey and Mark Abbey, removed to York. Thus the members were scattered as sheep without a shepherd or otherwise connected themselves with classes in the neighbouring villages. The chapel was enlarged and improved in 1884.

SHIPTON (*N. Dis.* 6. *Pop.* 435. *In.* 1780. *Chapel* 1817. *Cost* £140. *Acc.* 148. *Mems.* 41). On Saturday, February 28th, 1747, Wesley called at Shipton on his way to Thirsk, and spent half an hour "agreeably and usefully" with Mr. Coates, the minister of Acomb. This village was visited by the Methodists at an early period, but no class was formed till about 1780. Preaching was commenced in the house of Thomas Dawson, who with his wife formed the little society which was met by the preachers. In 1792 Thomas Garrett came to reside in the village, and provided a more convenient meeting-room. He and his wife took charge of the class. For a few years the work went on prosperously, until the steward of the estate peremptorily forbade the holding of Methodist meetings on the premises. The preaching was consequently removed to a room rented for the purpose. By and by a new steward was appointed, who readily consented to the restoration of the services, and gave assurance that the owner of the property had never expressed any disapprobation of it. In 1814 a neat chapel was erected, which was opened by the Rev. W. Naylor. Mr. Henry Clough undertook the class the same year and continued to meet it for nearly 50 years. He died aged 83, universally respected, having been a local preacher 54 years. When no longer able to manage his farm, his landlord generously allowed him a pension, and the clergyman of the parish preached his funeral sermon

from "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright for the end of that man is peace."

SKELTON (*N. Dis.* 4. *Pop.* 350. *In.* 1783. *No Chapel. Mems.* 5). Richard Burdsall preached here in the village school-house in 1783; but being prohibited on a second visit he licensed the house of Mr. Richard Wademan, where service was held a few times, when a spirit of persecution was aroused, and the "baser sort" threatened to drive the Methodists out of the place. By and by Mrs. Place, a Moravian lady, who held considerable property in the village, took them under her protection and secured for them the use of the school-house, which with some difficulty was licensed for public worship. It fell to Mr. Burdsall's lot to conduct the opening service which was interrupted by the violence of the mob, but an appeal to the law secured peace for some time. Fourteen years after this, the conversion of Miss Nodes of Skelton Hall, (afterwards the wife of the Rev. Dr. Newton) procured a temporary toleration of Methodist agency, but the want of chapel accommodation, which now for many years the York friends have wished to secure, has rendered the society in this village extremely fluctuating.

STAMFORD BRIDGE (*N. Dis.* 7½. *Pop.* 390. *In.* 1753. *Chapel* 1828. *Cost* £586. *Acc.* 361. *Mems.* 22) was once a Roman station, and is memorable as the scene of the decisive battle between Harold and Hardrada the Norwegian king. William Darney was the first to visit this place, but in 1753 Wesley preached in Robert Dilcock's barn and formed a class, which for some time was met by Samuel Lord from York, and occasionally by Mary Preston. Mr. Hessel and his wife offered themselves as the first members, and the little society bid fair to be a prosperous

one. The class was met at Edward Husher's, until about 1796 he erected a small chapel at his own cost, on his own ground. This was afterwards enlarged and presented the appearance of two dwelling-houses. Between 1788 and 1804, the Stamford Bridge society was joined to the Pocklington circuit, but some disagreement among the members greatly interfered with its prosperity. Francis Gawtrey, an excellent man, was leader at this time and long after. On its reunion with York both the congregations and the society increased, until in 1828 a new and commodious chapel was opened by the Rev. Messrs. Jabez Bunting, A.M., and Peter Mc Owan. Very soon every sitting was taken, and for a season under the oversight of Messrs. Hood, Smith, and Quarton all seemed to prosper; but the unfortunate attempt in 1843 to make this place the head of a circuit occasioned a feebleness of spirit which it has never fully recovered. William Minnethorpe, of Burton House, near Stamford Bridge, was one of the early Methodist preachers. After twenty-two years service, he died at Dunbar, and Mr. Wesley composed an epitaph for his tomb. John and Nicholas Manners, also early preachers, were born in this neighbourhood.

STILLINGFLEET (*N. Dis.* 7. *Pop.* 357. *In.* 1769. *Chapel* 1819. *Cost* £140. *Acc.* 120. *Mems.* 18) occurs in the circuit book under date 1769. In 1787 there was a small class of six members under the care of John Pallister, who was also a local preacher. A second class, formed ten years later, was committed to the charge of Jane Pallister, probably his wife, and then as time rolled on, both were united under the leadership of William Spencer. Stillingfleet was the birthplace of the Rev. Anthony Triffit.

STOCKTON-ON-THE-FOREST (*N. Dis.* 4. *Pop.* 423. *In.*

1760. *Chapel* 1826. *Acc.* 100. *Mems.* 45), so called because situated on the border of the once extensive forest of Galtres. This was one of the earliest places visited by the Methodists in the neighbourhood of York, and sent 13s. to the quarter board, when Hull only contributed 21s. and Scarborough 10s. 6d. Mr. Thomas Wilkinson, one of the first members, joined the society about 1760, and contributed much to its stability, as did his sons after him. His grandson, also named Thomas, a member of an Independent church in London, built himself a house at Stockton, his native village, with the intention of occasionally residing there, but died before it was completed. Adjoining, and under the same roof, is a schoolroom; also a room which he endowed as a chapel for the use of the Wesleyan Methodists and Independents; but the latter have taken little advantage of their privilege. The trustees are the superintendent of the York circuit for the time being, and the minister of Lendal Chapel, together with a lay representative from each denomination. At present the Methodists are represented by Mr. John R. Hill. The society in this village has been steadfast from the beginning and among the earlier leaders are John Woodcock, who was a valuable local preacher, and used to say, he had served two apprenticeships to his Lord and Master and would serve a third; he would have his ears bored through and serve Him as long as he lived; William Robinson, William Wilkinson, Matthew Nightingale and Thomas Brown. Many will also remember a pious negro, black as ebony, who came from this place, and often spoke with great effect in the York love-feasts.

STRENSALL (*N. Dis.* 6. *Pop.* 478. *In.* 1758. *Chapel* 1823. *Cost* £156. *Acc.* 114. *Mems.* 28) was very early

visited by the Methodists. Here John Atlay was awakened in 1759, under an exhortation given by Hannah Harrison. He had come to join a company of young friends at a supper party on New Year's day, and hearing the Methodists were about to hold a meeting that evening in the village, they agreed to go in hope of "making fun out of it." Just as they entered the place Miss Harrison was repeating the words:

"Come, Lord! the drooping sinner cheer,
Nor let Thy chariot wheels delay;
Appear, in my poor heart appear!
My God, my Saviour, come away!"

"I was cut to the heart," says John, "I could neither speak nor stir. I was convinced there was something in religion which I had never known. We returned home, but these words, 'My God, my Saviour, come away;' were continually sounding in my heart, and from that time, another young man, (Mr. Cattle), and I forsook all our trifling company." Mr. George Waterson, a person of some substance, was the first to open his house for preaching, and after his death Mr. Thomas Pallister, whose next door neighbour was a clergyman named Hindmarch. This reverend gentleman amused himself by throwing stones at the door when meetings were held, and to secure quiet Pallister removed to another part of the village. On his removal from the neighbourhood the services were held for nearly 35 years at the house of Widow Smith. In 1823 Mr. Hodgson, of Towthorpe, offered a site gratuitously for the present chapel, which was built through the exertions of Mr. John Creaser and others, and opened by the Rev. William Warrener, a native of the village and one of the first missionaries to the West Indies. The society has been steady from the beginning, but suffered

much in the year 1807 through emigration. The succession of leaders has been as follows: Messrs. Cobb, Taite, Johnson, Hudson, Young, Heppingstall, Lee, &c.

WARTHILL (*N. Dis.* 5. *Pop.* 153. *In.* 1828. *Chapel* 1841. *Cost* £444. *Acc.* 84. *Mems.* 26). Methodism in this village is of comparatively recent date. Mr. Leonard Young opened his house for preaching and was the first leader.

WHELDRAKE (*N. Dis.* 8. *Pop.* 603. *In.* 1768. *Chapel* 1868. *Cost* £550. *Acc.* 160. *Mems.* 23). Thomas Coulson was the first class-leader and filled the office until 1799, when he was succeeded by John Bond. In 1815 a blessed revival took place in this and the adjoining villages. Upwards of 150 persons flocked to the weekly prayer-meeting, which for some time was held in Mr. Harrison's barn. Some found peace at their own firesides, and the publicans, finding their hope of gain was gone, were alarmed at the prospect of being reduced to beggary. At this time two new classes were formed, the society numbering 61 under three leaders, William Collins, Thomas Gray, and Joseph Acomb.

We conclude these imperfect details respecting Methodism in York and the neighbourhood, with the fervent prayer to the God of our fathers: "*Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.*"

APPENDIX.

I. EXTRACTS FROM THE CIRCUIT STEWARD'S BOOK.

II. PREACHERS ITINERATING IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF YORK BETWEEN 1743 AND 1765.

III. CIRCUIT PLANS.

IV. PRAYER-LEADERS' PLANS.

V. STATISTICS OF METHODISM IN YORK.

VI. INDEX OF OBITUARIES IN THE METHODIST MAGAZINE.

VII. GENERAL INDEX.

I.

EXTRACTS FROM THE CIRCUIT STEWARD'S BOOK.

York Circuit Quarterly Meeting, June 22nd, 1770. Present, the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

Disbursements, June 22nd, 1770.

	£	s.	d.
Brought from last quarter	12	12	0
Farrier's Bill	0	14	3
Wm. Snowdon's Bill	0	6	6
Shaving Bill	0	10	0
Abraham Howden's Bill	1	19	0
Due from last quarter to Mr. Carlill, Mr. Peacock, and Mr. Fothergill, 5s each.	0	15	0
Mr. Thompson	3	0	0
Mr. Carlill	3	0	0
Mr. Peacock	3	0	0
Mr. Fothergill	3	0	0
Preachers' Bills	0	4	6
Mr. Peacock's Wife	2	10	0
Mr. Carlill's Wife	2	10	0
Mr. Fothergill's Wife	2	10	0
Hen. Batty	1	1	0
Travelling charges to four preachers at 5s. each	1	0	0
	38	12	3
Brought in ...	30	12	9
Due to Steward...	7	19	6

	£	s.	d.
Acomb	0	7	0
Askham } ..... Rufforth }	0	7	0
	0	3	0
Acklam	0	11	0
Asselby } Barnby and } Bolton }	0	5	0
Bp. Wilton	0	9	0
Bransdale	0	14	0
Bubwith	0	6	0
Bridlington ...	0	18	0
Beverley	0	12	0
Catton, upper	0	5	0
Catton	0	8	6
Cave	0	6	0
Claxton	0	3	6
Cornborough...	0	12	0
Cottingham ...	0	5	0
Cottingwith ...	0	4	0
Dunnington ...			
Easingwold ...	0	4	0
	7	0	0

	£	s.	d.
Ellerker	0	16	0
Fenton	0	6	0
Gillemoor	0	7	0
Hamilton	0	10	0
Holm	0	19	0
Huby	0	8	0
Hull	1	1	0
Kirby	0	5	0
Lastingham ...	0	0	0
Malton	0	15	0
Helmsley	0	9	0
Melbourn	0	5	0
Melton	0	0	0
Newbold	0	4	6
Ovingham	0	9	0
Pocklington ...	0	10	6
Skern			
Settrington ...	0	7	3
Seaton	0	5	0
Scarbro'	0	10	6
	8	7	9

	£	s.	d.
Sheriff Hutton	0	10	6
Sherburn	0	10	6
Snainton	0	10	0
Stockton	0	10	6
Strensall	0	10	0
Healaugh	0	6	0
Stillington	0	14	0
Spaldington ...	0	6	0
Selby	0	1	0
Tadcaster	0	16	0
Thornaby	0	5	0
Tockwith	0	0	0
Tollerton	0	10	0
Ulleskelf	0	10	6
Welbourn	0	0	0
Weighton	0	7	6
Wilberfoss	0	10	0
Wilton	0	0	0
Wheldrake	0	1	0
York	1	2	0
	8	0	6

	£	s.	d.
1st column	7	0	0
2nd do.	8	7	9
3rd do.	8	0	6
	23	8	3
By collections in the Circuit & Conference	7	4	6
	30	12	9

This account has been examined and found just to the best of our knowledge,

J. THOMPSON, THOS. CARLILL, JOHN PEACOCK.

EXTRACTS FROM THE CIRCUIT STEWARD'S BOOK.

Collections for Lady Day and Midsummer, 1780.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Acomb	0	10	6	0	10	6
Askam	0	7	6	0	7	6
Bubwith				1	16	0
Cornborough	1	5	0	1	1	0
Cottingwith	0	6	0	0	6	0
Catton				0	6	0
Do. odd House	0	5	0	0	4	0
Easingwold	0	6	0			
Fenton	0	8	0	0	10	0
Hambleton	0	8	0	0	8	6
Henlow	0	16	0	0	16	0
Helmsley	0	14	6	1	3	0
Do. Moor	0	7	6			
Haxby	0	11	0	0	11	6
Kelfield	0	10	6			
Melburn						
Hessay	0	12	6	0	7	6
Ryther	1	4	0	1	4	0
Rufforth	0	4	0	0	5	0
Stillingfleet	0	9	0	0	2	0
Stillington	0	10	0	0	10	0
Stockton	1	1	6	1	1	6
Selby	0	12	0	0	12	0
Tollerton	0	8	0	0	7	6
Tadcaster	3	0	0	3	0	0
Tockwith	0	15	0	0	15	0
Ulleskelf	0	12	0	0	12	0
Wilberfoss	0	10	6	0	12	0
York	6	0	0	6	0	0
John Corner	0	5	0			
Wheldrake	0	3	0	0	3	0
Strensall	0	6	0	0	7	0
Sheriffhutton	1	1	0	1	1	0
Wistow				0	13	0
Claxton				0	11	0
Wm. Waters	0	11	8	0	10	6
	£25	0	8	26	14	0
				25	0	8
				51	4	8

Disbursements for Lady Day and Midsummer, 1780.

Lady Day.	£	s.	d.
Mr. Fenwick and Travelling Expenses	3	6	0
Mr. Morgan and Travelling Expenses	3	6	0
Mr. Morgan, Children	3	18	0
Do. Washing	0	6	0
Do. Mrs. Morgan's lying-in	1	1	0
Letters	0	18	9
Farrying	0	5	9
Thos. Pears	0	8	0
Fanny's Bill	0	8	8½
Do.	0	3	1
Blacksmith's Bill	0	10	6
Mrs. Morgan	3	0	0
Dicky Burdsall	3	6	0
His Mother	3	0	0
	23	17	9½
Midsummer.			
Mr. Fenwick and Travelling Expenses	3	6	0
Mr. Morgan do.	3	6	0
Mrs. Morgan	3	0	0
Children	3	18	0
Washing, Mr. Morgan	0	6	0
Rd. Burdsall and Mother	6	6	0
Letters	1	0	4
A Brush and Candles	0	6	2
Blankets	0	5	0
Horse Hire	0	7	6
Mr. Fenwick, Shaving Bill	0	10	6
Mr. Hall's Bill	3	17	6
Mr. Fenwick to Conference	2	2	0
Total Disbursements	52	8	9½
For two last quarters' total collections	51	14	8
Short these two Qrs.	0	14	1½

II.

PREACHERS,

itinerating in the neighbourhood of York from 1743 to 1765 as far as can be ascertained.

Before the definition of the Round.

1743—1745. John Nelson, William Darney, Alexander Coates, Jonathan Reeves, William Shent, Francis Scott.

The Yorkshire Round

including Yorkshire, Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, and Lincolnshire.

1746 J. Haughton, J. Bennett, Jas. Wheatley, J. Jones, John Nelson.

1747 Thos. Westall, John Bennett, T. Meyrick, Jas. Jones.

The Yorkshire Round

including Leeds, Birstal, Keighley, Acomb, Sykehouse, Epworth, Hainton, Grimsby, and the Fens.

1748 Thos. Colbeck, Wm. Darney, E. C. Webster.

1749 Wm. Shent (assistant).

1750 Samuel Larwood, Thos. Mitchell.

1751 John Nelson, Jon. Maskew.

1752 John Haime, Jon. Maskew, Matt. Lowes.

The Yorkshire and Haworth Round.

1753 Rev. Wm. Grimshaw, Jon. Maskew, John Whitford, Enoch Williams, Jos. Jones, Wm. Shent, John Edwards.

1754 Christopher Hopper.

The Leeds Round.

1755 John Fenwick, Thos. Lee, Thos. Johnson, Wm. Shent.

1756 Peter Jaco, Thos. Seccombe, Wm. Shent.

1757 Thos. Lee, John Johnson, Thos. Olivers.

The York Round.

1758 T. Mitchell, T. Tobias, W. Allwood.

1759 Alex. Mather.

1760 Thos. Olivers, Thos. Hanson.

1761 John Nelson, John Manners.

1762 Peter Jaco, John Manners, Nicholas Manners, Rich. Henderson, Jas. Cotty, John Pawson.

1763 John Manners, Thos. Newell, Thos. Carlill, John Cattermole, John Atlay.

1764 John Furze, John Mason, John Poole.

1765 Thos. Johnson, Thos. Mitchell, Geo. Hudson.

The appointments to the York Round from this date are duly recorded in the Minutes of Conference.

II.

COPY OF A WRITTEN LOCAL PREACHERS' PLAN. 1792.

	AUGUST.				SEPTEMBER.					OCTOBER.			
	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28
Copmanthorpe & Askham ..	..	R B	..	..	..	T D	..	..	..	R W	..	..	..
Longeliff and Hemburgh ..	J B	..	T C	..	W A	..	O	..	Rib.	..	R S	..	J B
Selby	T P	..	W A	..	T C	..	R S	..	T W	..	..	..	..
Tollerton and Easingwold ..	J C	..	R B	..	R H	..	T C	..	T P	..	W A	..	T W
Rufforth and Hessay.....	R B	..	T D	..	T P	..	R W	..	O	..	T W	..	W A
Newton and Kexby	O	..	T W	..	R W	..	T B	..	W A	..	T P	..	T W
Westow and Cawood	T D	..	R W	..	R S		Rib.	..	T B	..	R B	..	T C
Stockton and Helmsley	..	..	..	T W	..	..	..	T P	..	..	..	T W	..
Stillington & Easingwold ..	..	T C	..	W A	..	R S	..	T C	..	R W	..	Rib.	..
Shipton and Newton	..	T P	..	R B	..	W A	..	R H	..	T C	..	J C	..
Thornton and Flaxton.....	..	R H	..	T P	..	T W	..	J W	..	W A	.	T C	..
Sutton and Wheldrick.....	..	J B	..	T W	..	T C	..	Rib.	..	T P	..	J B	..
Sheriffhutton & Farlington	..	T W	..	T C	..	T P	..	R S	..	Rib.	..	W A	..
Uskell	..	W A	..	..	..	Rib.	..	..	..	R S	..	..	..

N.B. As the Superintendent had to supply a *written* copy to each of the Local Preachers, the appointments of the Itinerant Preachers were not given, and only the initials of those appointed. The names represented by the initials are as follow:—

R. B.	Rich. Burdsall.	T. D.	Thos. Dodgson.	R. H.	Rich. Harrison.
R. S.	Rob. Spence.	T. W.	Thos. Wilkinson.	J. C.	James Cattle.
T. P.	Thos. Pears.	T. C.	Thos. Chapel.	J. B.	John Bond.
R. W.	Rich. Waddy.	W. A.	Wm. Amos.	O.	Jas. Oliver.

Rib. Supposed to be James Peart, who resided near Ribstone and took a few places in the York Circuit.

THE YORK ROUND IN 1798.

Preachers:—Revs. Jos. Entwistle, Robert Roberts, and John Stamp.

1798			1798		
S.	Sep. 16.	York, 8 and 6 o'clock.	S.	Oct. 7.	York 8 and 6.
M.		York	M.		Q. Meet., Lovefeast, & Band
T.		Acomb	T.		Huntington
W.		Bishopthorpe	W.		Fulford
T.		Stockton	T.		Huby
F.		Wheldrake	F.		Shipton
S.		Westow	S.		Alne
S.	,, 23.	Westow 9, Cawood 2 and 6	S.	,, 14.	Alne 9, Tollerton 2 and 6
M.		Kelfield	M.		Nun Monkton
T.		Riecall	T.		Cockhill
W.		Stillingfleet	W.		Poppleton
T.		Copmanthorpe	T.		Marston
F.		Ryther	F.		Healough
S.		Fenton	S.		Ulleskelf
S.	,, 30.	Fenton 9, Tadcaster 2 and 6.	S.	,, 21.	Ulleskelf 9, Tadcaster 2 & 6
M.	Oct. 1.	Little Askham	M.		Rufforth
T.		Holtby	T.		Haxby
W.		Dunnington	W.		Strensall
T.		York	T.		York
F.		Select Band	F.		Select Band
S.		Prayer Meeting	S.		Prayer Meeting

III.

SUNDAY PLAN

Of the Travelling and Local Preachers in the York Circuit.

1809. TIME.		JULY.				AUGUST.				*EXPLANATION.*
		9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	
York ...8...1½...6	.....	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1. CROWTHER.
Tadcaster 1½...6	.....	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2. PIPE.
Ulleskelf ...9...2	.....	14	1	19	3	15	2	18	1	3. FARRAR.
Fenton .....9...2	.....	3	18	2	14	1	10	3	9	4. BURDSALL.
Barkstone 10	.....		18		14		10		9	5. PEARS.
Wistow ...9 or 2	Cawood 10...2...6	4	2	9	1	18	3	15	2	6. SPENCE.
Copmanthorp 10½	Little Askam ...2	17		12		13		4		7. PEART.
Great Askam ...9	Acomb 3½		4		16		17		14	8. MASKALL.
Hessay 1½	Marston ..,.....3½	12		20		14		16		9. CAMERON.
Moor-Monkton 2	Poppleton 6		17		7		13		20	10. PALLISTER.
Low Poppleton 10	Knapton 2			18				14		11. NIGHTINGALE.
Appleton.....2	.....		9		20		14		13	12. COULTAS.
Naburn 2	Fulford 6	5		17		10		13		13. ROLLINSON.
Escrick 9½	Stillingfleet 2	9		15		17		20		14. ABBEY.
Thorganby ...9½	Wheldrake 2	6		10		8		7		15. WESTWOOD.
*Stockton 9	Dunnington 2		*13		17		*11		7	16. JEWETT.
Shipton 10	Skelton.....2		20		11		12		6	17. BLANCHARD.
Strensall 2	Haxby 6	13		3		20		1		18. LOCKWOOD.
Huntington 9...6	.....			3	12			1	11	
Gate Helmsley 10	Stamford Bridge 2	1		7		2		11		ON TRIAL.
Langwith 6	.....		16				20			19. DOWSON.
Selby.....	.....			4				9		20. AGAR.

The Quarter Days will be October the 1st, and December the 25th.

III.

A PLAN OF THE YORK CIRCUIT, 1824.

Places and Times of Preaching.

	M.	A.	E.
YORK — Newstreet.....	8	0	6
	10½	0	0
	0	2½	0
YORK — Albion-street	10½	0	0
	0	0	6
Acomb	0	2	6
Fulford	0	2	0
	0	0	6
Tadcaster	0	1½	0
	0	0	6
Copmanthorpe	10	0	0
Appleton	0	2½	0
Ulleskelf	9	0	0
Stillingfleet, Naburn	9	2	0
Fenton	9	0	0
Barkston, Fenton	10	2	0
Colton, Appleton	10	2½	0
Bolton	9	0	0
Stutton, Ulleskelf	9½	2	0
Catterton, Bilbrough, Healough...	10	1½	6
Newton, Towton	9	2	0
Naburn	0	2	6
Gate Helmsley, Stamford Bridge	10	2	0
Helmsley, S. Bridge, Dunnington	10	2	6
Copmanthorpe, Little Askham ...	10	1½	0
Copmanthorpe, Acaster	0	2	6
Dunnington, Osbaldwick	0	2	6
Escrick, Wheldrake	0	2	6
Wheldrake, Stillingfleet	0	2	6
Strensall, Haxby	0	2	6
Huntington...	0	2	0
Flaxton, Stockton	0	2	6
Stockton	0	0	6
Rawcliffe, Shipton...	9	2	0
Shipton, Skelton	0	2	6
Moor-Monkton, Poppleton ...	0	2	6
Rufforth, Hessay, Poppleton ...	10	2	6
Heworth, Heslington	0	2	6
Great Askham, Dringhouses ...	0	1½	6
Clifton	0	0	7½
Low Poppleton	0	2	0

No.

1 Hopkins.
2 M'Kitrick.
3 Floyd.
4 Burdsall.
5 Spence.
6 Peart.
7 Nightingale.
8 Westwood.
9 Lockwood.
10 Taylor.
11 Clough.
12 Burdekin.
13 White.
14 Swift.
15 Walkington.
16 Blanchard.
17 Smith.
18 Webster.
19 Hutchinson.
20 Nowell.
21 Emmerson.
22 Rooke.
23 Elsworth.
24 Gates.
25 Nayler.
26 Brown.
27 Smith, J. R.
28 Meek.
29 Fletcher.
30 Scaum.
31 Wray.
32 Elsworth, H.

On Trial—2nd Plan.

33 Shepherd.
34 Dagget.
35 Cherry.

First Plan.

36 J. S.
37 R. S. H.
38 R. S.

III.

THE LORD'S DAY PLAN

OF THE

Wesleyan Methodist Travelling and Local Preachers,

In the York Circuit.—1843.

Places.	Time.		
New Street	10½	2½	6
Centenary Chapel	10½		6
Albion Street	10½		6
St. George's	10½		6
Stamford-Bridge		2	6½
Gate-Helmsley	10½		
Copmanthorpe	10½	2	6½
Bishopthorpe			6½
Acaster		2½	
Naburn		2	6½
Fulford		2½	6½
Stillingfleet	9½		6½
Wheldrake		2	6½
Escrick			6½
Skelton		2½	6½
Shipton		2	
Haxby			6½
Poppleton	10½		6½
Moor Monkton		2	6½
Rufforth	10	2	
Hessay	10½	2	
Acomb		2	6½
Knapton		2	
Great Askham			6½
Dringhouses	10½		6½
Grimston		2	
Dunnington	9½		6½
Warthill		2½	6½
Stockton	10½		6½
Heworth		2	
Flaxton	10½		
Strensall		2	
Huntington		2	6¼
Langwith Hall		2	
Heslington			6½
Claxton		2	
Sandhutton			6½
Murton		2	
Osbaldwick			6½

PREACHERS.

1. R. Waddy, New-street.
2. G. Roebuck, Monkgate.
3. J. Rattenbury, New-street.
4. J. H. Beech, Coney-street.
5. J. Burdsall, Dove-street.
6. A. Triffitt, Holgate Lane.
7. J. Everett, Dove-street.
8. M. Mallinson, Dale-street.
9. J. Taylor, High Ousegate.
10. H. Clough, Shipton.
11. R Burdekin, Parliament-street.
12. H. Hirstwood, Stonegate.
13. J. Knaggs, Fossgate.
14. J. R. Smith, Hope-street.
15. H. Meek, Goodramgate.
16. W. Fletcher, Tanner Row.
17. T. W. Daggett, Wesley Place.
18. R. Smithson, Skeldergate.
19. C. Robinson, Acomb.
20. J. Coultas, Low Ousegate.
21. J. Jones, St. Dennis-street.
22. R. Barnes, Parliament-street.
23. H. Elsworth, Hessay.
24. J. Smithies, Lendal.
25. D. Hill, Fossgate.
26. T. Varey, Stamford Bridge.
27. G. P. Bainbridge, Fishergate.
28. W. Brown, Parliament-street.
29. W. Lawson, Parliament-street.
30. F. Taylor, Lawrence-street.
31. T. Clayton, Bootham.
32. R. Walker, Petergate.
33. J. Lisle, Swan-street.
34. J. Webster, Goodramgate.
35. W. Leyland, Petergate.
36. J. Smith, Walmgate.
37. J. Emmerson, Escrick.
38. W. Burnett, Dove-street.
39. J. Mawson, Coney-street.
40. G. Hawksworth, Walmgate.
41. F. Wolstenholme, Lord Mayor's Walk.
42. T. Hewson, Clementhorpe.
43. H. Creaser, St. Andrewgate.
44. J. Greaves, Shambles.
45. E. Webster, Goodramgate.
46. Simpson, Dove-street.
47. J. Lyth, Spurriergate.
48. Jones, St. Dennis-street.

On Trial.

49. Walker.

IV.

YORK PRAYERLEADERS' PLAN.

1814.

SUNDAYS.

Knapton - -	6
Hessay - -	2½
Rufforth - -	6
Huntington -	6
Low-Poppleton	6
Naburn - -	6
Murton - -	6
Stockton - -	6
Skelton - -	2½
Langwith -	2½
Poppleton -	6
Osbaldwick -	6
Rawcliffe -	6
Fulford - -	6
Dringhouses	2
North-street	8
Clifton - -	11
Gillygate -	8
Vestry - -	8
Poorhouse -	3
Goodramgate	8
Walmgate 1st	8
Walmgate 2nd	3
Hungate - -	8
Walmgate 3rd	8
Walmgate 4th	8

EXPLANATION.

1 Moor and Wilkinson.
2 Watson and D. Sigsworth.
3 Spink, Pickering, and Curtis.
4 Terry, Agar, and Meek.
5 Buckle, Pritchard, and Fox.
6 Richardson 2nd and C. Beal.
7 Tate, Hawksworth, and Hayes.
8 Kimber, Bowes, and Diggs.
9 Bordon and Brown.
10 Jacques and Clarkson.
11 Wildon and Chapley.
12 Holmes 2nd and Willison.
13 Beal 1st, Oddy, and Heppingstall.
14 Preston, Lazenby, and Kirk.
15 Wright, Gasking, and Mannering.
16 Lyth, Jewitt, and Spetch.
17 Walls and Crumbie.
18 Stodhart, Cooper, and Fryer.
19 Brook, Staniford, and Townhend.
20 Richardson 1st, Robinson 2nd, and Fozzard.
21 Moseley, Holmes 1st, and Moody.
22 Smith 1st, G. Watson, & Beal 2nd.
23 Smith 2nd, Shouksmith, & J. Tate.
24 Sigsworth, Westland, & Robinson.
25 Duke, Whitehead, and Bolton.
26 Taylor, Hirst, and Russell.

*** No Place must be omitted.

IV.

A PLAN FOR THE YORK FEMALE METHODIST PRAYER LEADERS, 1821.

PLACES.		NAMES.
Clifton - - - -	$7\frac{3}{4}$	1 Bentley, Plews.
New-street - - -	8	2 Trout, I. Trout.
Albion-street - -	8	3 Duke, L. Duke.
Poor-House - -	6	4 Thompson, Smith.
Goodramgate - -	8	5 Simpson, Severs.
		6 Rooke, Hick.
Walmgate 1st - -	8	7 Clark, Walker.
Walmgate 2nd - -	8	8 Denham, Hunton.
Walmgate 3rd - -	8	9 Bradley, Askwith.
Walmgate-Bar - -	8	10 Herbert, Whitehouse.
		11 Jackson, Garnett.
Hungate - - -	8	12 Overton, Collins.
Tanner-Row - -	8	13 Masterman, Norman.
Barker-Hill - -	8	14 Massar, Greenwood.
Fossgate - - -	8	15 Monkhouse, Seymour.
Peaseholmgreen -	8	16 M. Clark, Wilson.
Haymarket - - -	8	17 Richardson, E. Simpson.
		18 Lyth, Kirkham, Rollinson.

LOVEFEASTS.

Feb. 4th and May 13th.

III.

A PLAN

Of the Friday Evening Preachings.

PLACES.	Hours.	Nov.			Dec.				Jan.				Feb.				March.				
		16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	29
WALMGATE	7	33	31	21	28	5	10	12	13	17	18	1	23	30	28	5	21	10	13	4	33
HUNGATE	7	13		10		30		4		21		31		5		12		17		18	
GOODRAMGATE	7		17		4		13		1		33		5		10		30		12		21
MARYGATE	7		30		18		12		4		1		28		17		33		21		13
SKELDERGATE	7	1		4		28		5		30		10		1		13		23		28	

N.B. The Figure for each Preacher is the same in this as in the Sunday Plan.

V.

STATISTICS OF METHODISM WITHIN THE CITY OF YORK, 1885.

	Ministers and Supernumeraries.	Local Preachers.	Church Members.	Chapels.	Mission-Rooms.	Sittings.	S. Schools.	Officers.	Scholars.
WESLEYAN METHODIST									
Newstreet Circuit	8	55	1657	6	3	4850	9	340	2060
Wesley Do.	4	26	857	2	4	2952	6	171	1330
PRIMITIVE METHODIST									
1st Station	6	35	330	2	1	1033	3	70	400
2nd Do.	1	26	285	2	1	1270	2	95	603
METHODIST NEW CONNEXION	1	0	70	1	0	600	1	22	250
Do. FREE CHURCH	2	18	190	2	0	1000	2	52	300
Totals	22	160	3389	15	9	11705	23	750	4943

VI.

INDEX OF MEMOIRS, OBITUARIES, &c.

of persons more or less connected with the York Circuit, to be found in the Methodist Magazine. The Roman numerals refer to the volume *from the commencement*, and the figures to the page. Considerable care has been taken in compiling this list yet it is more than probable that omissions have undesignedly occurred.

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